

JANUARY 1910

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ISSUE

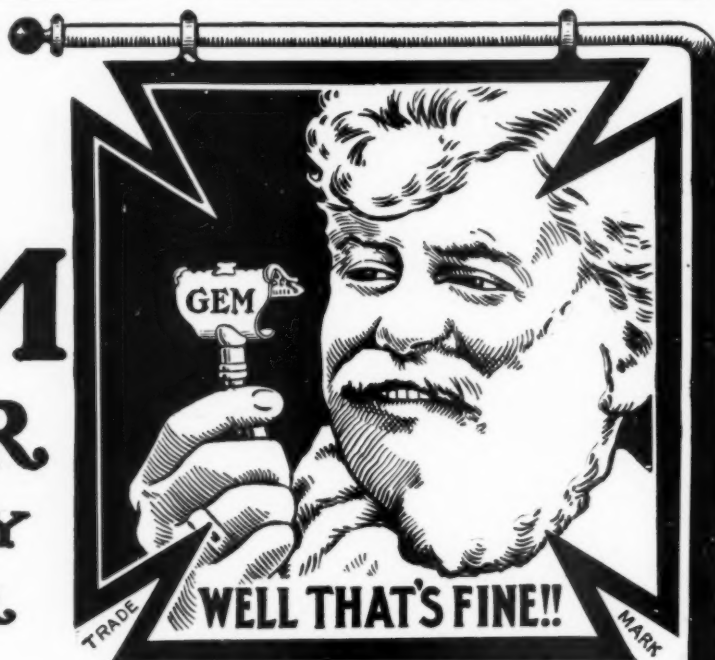
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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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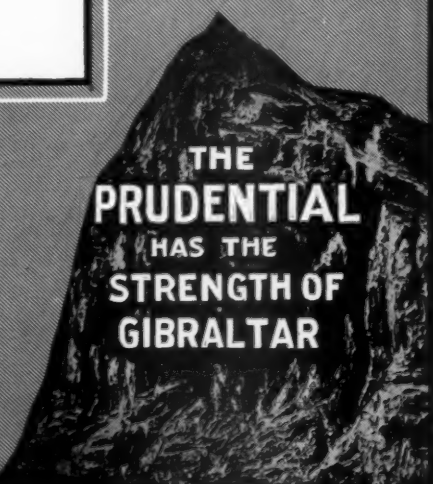
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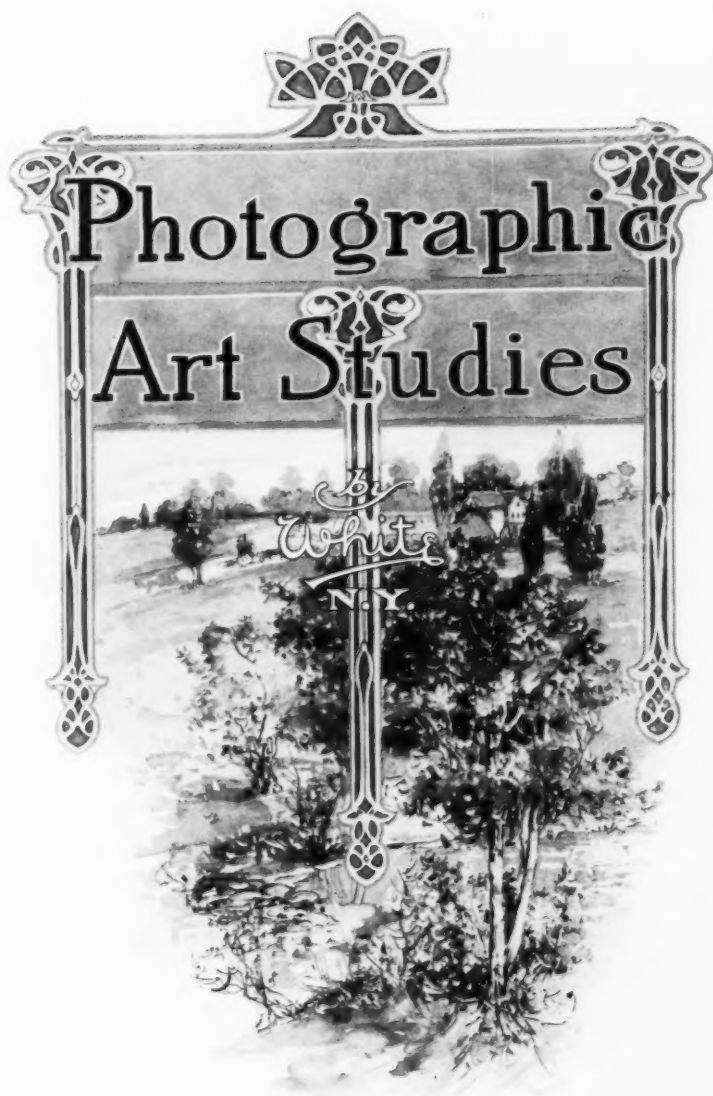
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With Sam Bernard in "The Girl and Wizard"



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in "Miss Innocence"



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in "The Woman of It" new play by Er. Lawshé



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Appearing in Vaudeville







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in "The Midnight Sons"



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in Repertoire





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MISS MARIE BAKER
in "Queen of the Moulin Rouge"





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MISS LOUISE WOODS
in "Is Matrimony a Failure?"





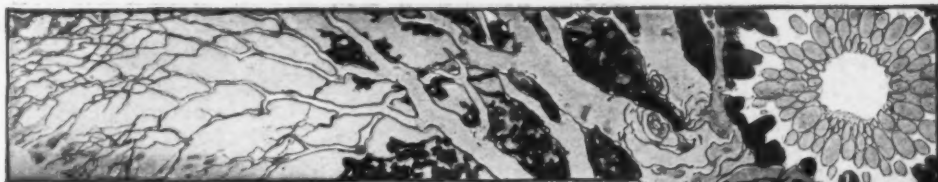
PHOTOGRAPH BY *White* N.Y.

MISS JEANETTE HORTON
in "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge"



Cuthbert Strong was not the man to make a forbearing lover

To accompany "In Nora's Absence"—page 465



THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Vol. XIV. January 1910 No. 3



A Short Line Romance

BY HAMLIN GARLAND

Author of "Main Traveled Roads," etc.

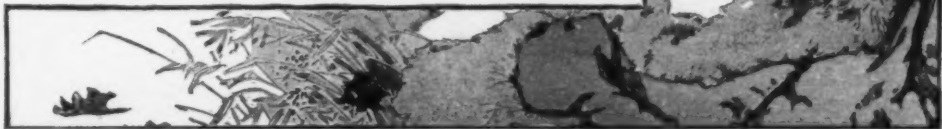
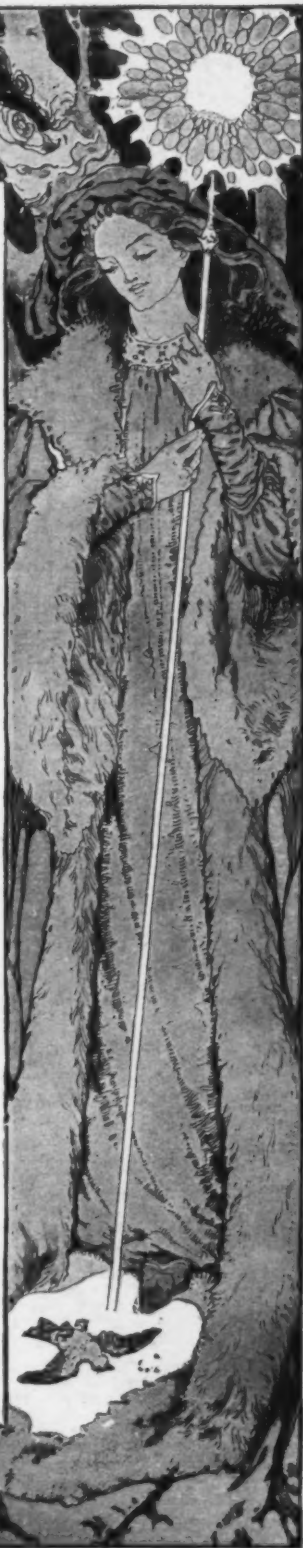
ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HAMBIDGE



HE only passenger in the car who really interested me was a burly young fellow who sat just ahead of me, and who seemed to be something more than a tourist, for the conductor greeted him pleasantly and the brakeman shook his hand. We were climbing to Cripple Creek by way of the Short Line, but as "the sceneries" were all familiar to me, I was able to study my fellow passengers.

The man before me was very attractive, although he was by no interpretation a gentle type. On the contrary, he looked to be the rough and ready American, rough in phrase and ready to fight. His corduroy coat hunched about his muscular shoulders in awkward lines, and his broad face, inclining to fat, was stern and harsh. He appeared to be about thirty-five years of age.

The more I studied him the more I hankered to know





his history. The conductor, coming through, hailed him with:

"Well, gettin' back, eh? Had a good trip?" Once or twice the miner—he was evidently a miner—leaned from the window and waved his hat to some one on the crossing, shouted a cheery, "How goes it?" and the brakeman asked, "How did you find the East?"

From all this I deduced that the miner had been away on a visit to New York, or Boston, or Washington.

As we rose, the air became so cool, so clear, so crisp, that we seemed to be entering a land of eternal dew and roses, and as our car filled with the delicious scent of pine branches and green grasses, the miner, with a solemn look on his face, took off his hat, and turning to me said, with deep intonation:

"This is what I call *air*. This is good for what ails me."

"You've been away," I stated rather than asked.

"I've been back East—back to see the old folks—first time in eleven years."

"What do you call East?" I pursued.

"Anything back of the Missouri river," he replied, smiling a little. "In this case it was Michigan—near Jackson."

"Citizen of the camp?" I nodded up the cañon.

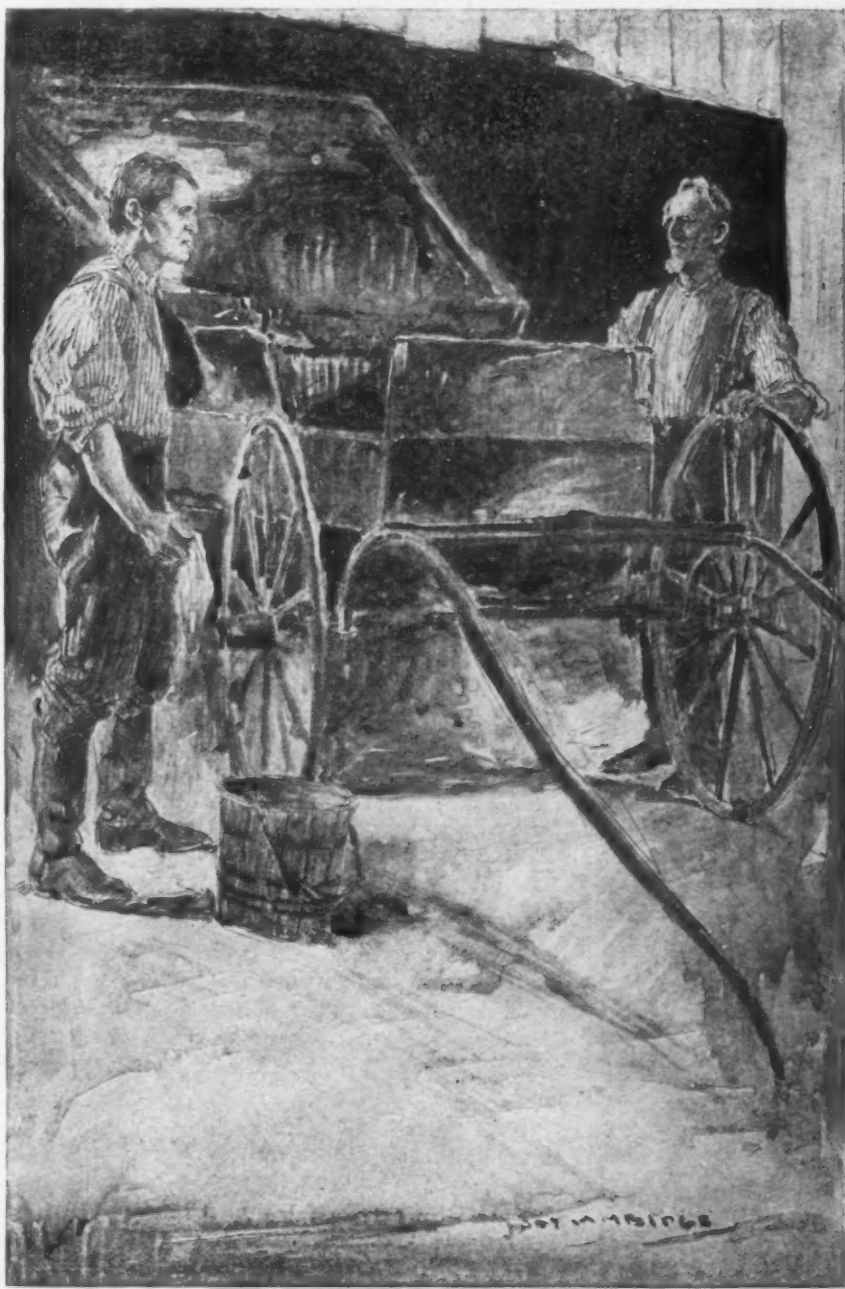
"Yes, I'm working a lease on Bull Hill."

"How's the old camp looking?"

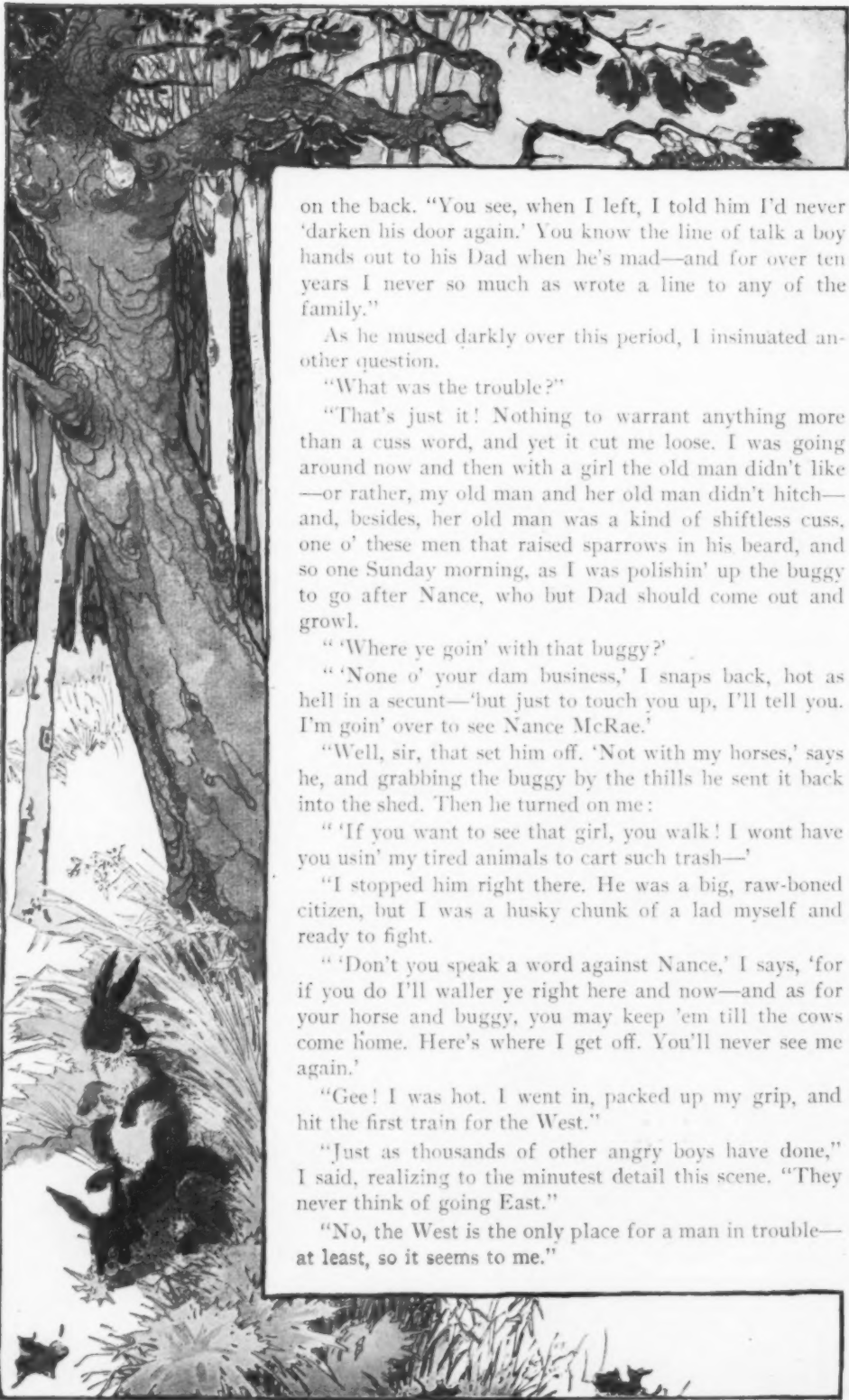
"All shot to pieces. Half the houses empty, and business gone to pot. It's a purty yellow proposition now."

"You don't say! It was pretty slow when I was there last, but I didn't suppose it had gone broke. What's the matter of it?"

"Too many monopolists. All the good properties have gone into one or two hands. Then these labor wars have scared operators away. However, I'm not complaining, I've made good on this lease of mine." He grinned boyishly. "I've been back to flash my roll in the old man's face. You see, I left the farm rather sudden one Sunday morning eleven years ago, and I'd never been back." His face changed to a graver, sweeter expression. "My sister wrote that mother was not very well and kind o' grievin' about me, so, as I was making good money, I thought I could afford to surprise the old man by slapping him



"As I was polishin' up the buggy who but Dad should come out"



on the back. "You see, when I left, I told him I'd never 'darken his door again.' You know the line of talk a boy hands out to his Dad when he's mad—and for over ten years I never so much as wrote a line to any of the family."

As he mused darkly over this period, I insinuated another question.

"What was the trouble?"

"That's just it! Nothing to warrant anything more than a cuss word, and yet it cut me loose. I was going around now and then with a girl the old man didn't like—or rather, my old man and her old man didn't hitch—and, besides, her old man was a kind of shiftless cuss, one o' these men that raised sparrows in his beard, and so one Sunday morning, as I was polishin' up the buggy to go after Nance, who but Dad should come out and growl.

"Where ye goin' with that buggy?"

"None o' your dam business," I snaps back, hot as hell in a secunt—"but just to touch you up, I'll tell you. I'm goin' over to see Nance McRae."

"Well, sir, that set him off. 'Not with my horses,' says he, and grabbing the buggy by the thills he sent it back into the shed. Then he turned on me:

"If you want to see that girl, you walk! I wont have you usin' my tired animals to cart such trash—"

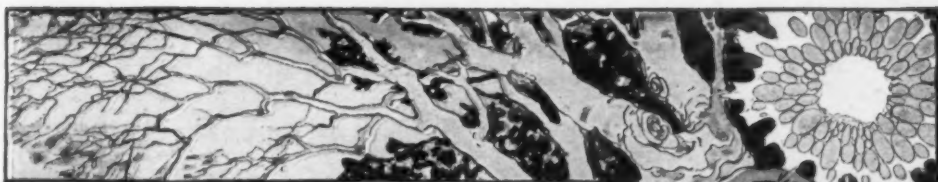
"I stopped him right there. He was a big, raw-boned citizen, but I was a husky chunk of a lad myself and ready to fight.

"Don't you speak a word against Nance," I says, 'for if you do I'll waller ye right here and now—and as for your horse and buggy, you may keep 'em till the cows come home. Here's where I get off. You'll never see me again.'

"Gee! I was hot. I went in, packed up my grip, and hit the first train for the West."

"Just as thousands of other angry boys have done," I said, realizing to the minutest detail this scene. "They never think of going East."

"No, the West is the only place for a man in trouble—at least, so it seems to me."



"Where did you go? What did you do?"

He mused again as if recalling his struggles.

"I dropped off in Kansas and got a job on a farm and fussed around there for the fall and winter. Then I got the mining fever and came to Victor. Of course, there wasn't anything for a grass-cutter like me to do in the hills but swing a pick. I didn't like underground work, and so I went on a ranch again. Well, I kept tryin' the mining game off and on, prospectin' here and there, and finally I got into this leasing business, and two years ago I secured a lease on the *Red Cent* and struck it good and plenty. Oh, I don't intend to say it's any Portland—but it pays me and I've been stacking up some few dollars down at the Commercial Bank, and feelin' easy."

The man's essential sturdiness of character came out as he talked and his face lost the heavy and rather savage look it had worn at first. I had taken a seat beside him by this time and my sincere interest in his affairs seemed to please him. He was eager to talk, as one who had been silent for a long time.

I led him back to the point of most interest to me.

"And so at last you relented and went home? I hope you found the old folks both alive? Did they know where you were?"

"Yes. My sister saw my name in a paper—when I made my stake—and wrote, and mother used to send word—used to mention Dad occasionally."

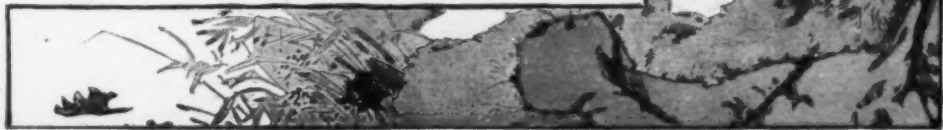
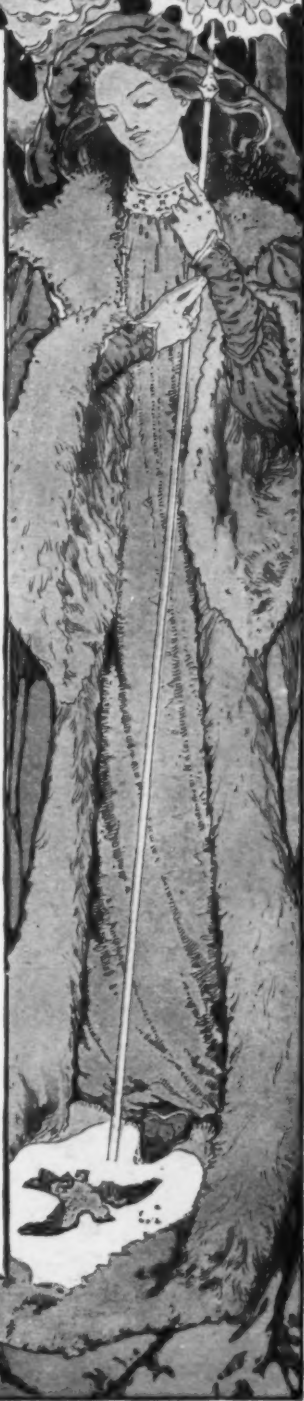
He laughed silently.

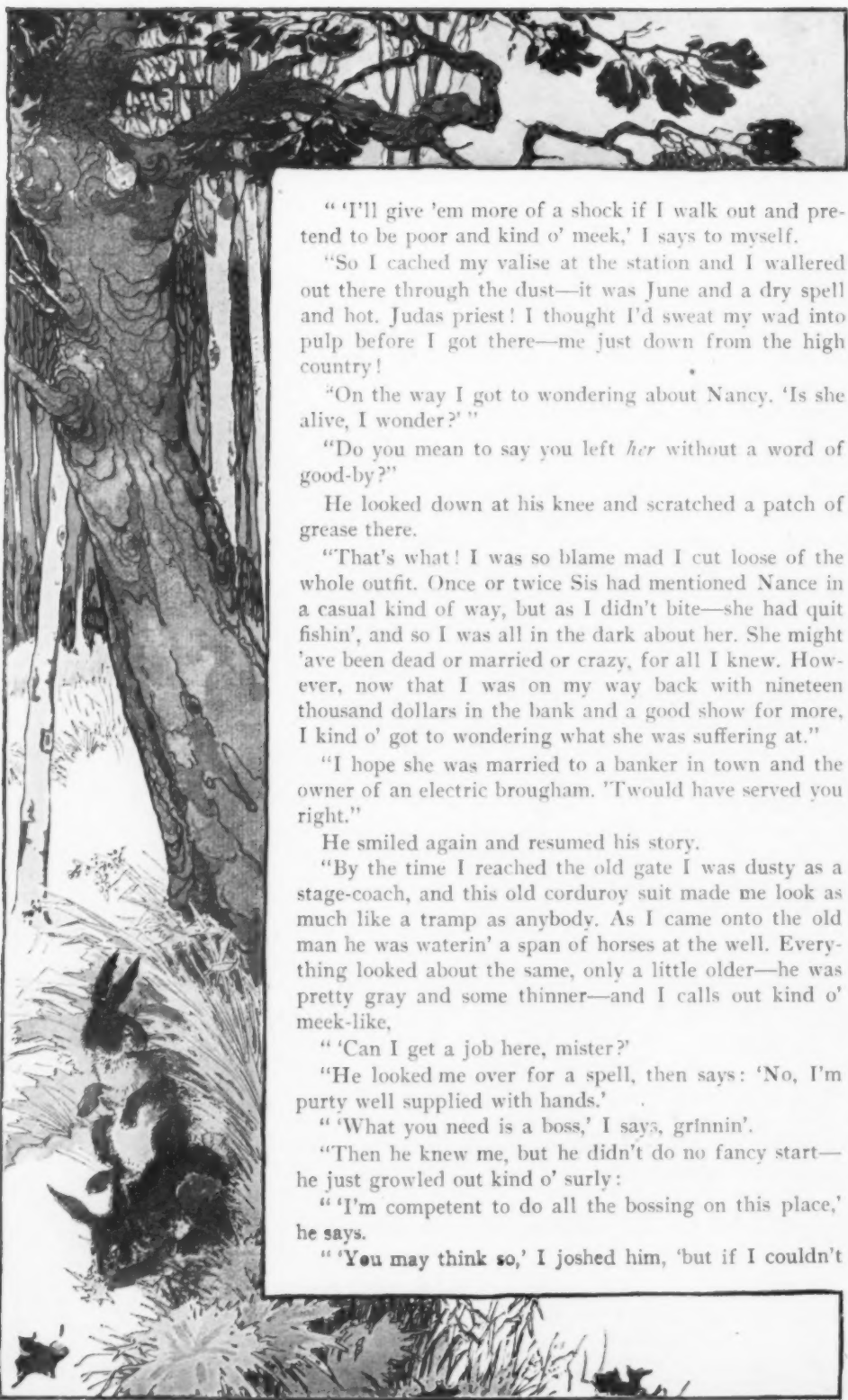
"It sure is great fun, this goin' back to the home pasture with a fat wad in your pants-pocket—Lord! I owned the whole town."

"Tell me about it!" I pleaded.

He was ready to comply.

"Our house stood near the railway, about four miles this side of Jackson, and you bet I had my head out of the winder to see if it was all there. It was. It looked just the same, only the old man had painted it yellow—and seemed like I could see mother settin' on the porch. I'd had it all planned to hire the best automobile in town and go up there in shape to heal sore eyes—but changed my plan."





"'I'll give 'em more of a shock if I walk out and pretend to be poor and kind o' meek,' I says to myself.

"So I cached my valise at the station and I wallered out there through the dust—it was June and a dry spell and hot. Judas priest! I thought I'd sweat my wad into pulp before I got there—me just down from the high country!

"On the way I got to wondering about Nancy. 'Is she alive, I wonder?'"

"Do you mean to say you left *her* without a word of good-by?"

He looked down at his knee and scratched a patch of grease there.

"That's what! I was so blame mad I cut loose of the whole outfit. Once or twice Sis had mentioned Nance in a casual kind of way, but as I didn't bite—she had quit fishin', and so I was all in the dark about her. She might 'ave been dead or married or crazy, for all I knew. However, now that I was on my way back with nineteen thousand dollars in the bank and a good show for more, I kind o' got to wondering what she was suffering at."

"I hope she was married to a banker in town and the owner of an electric brougham. 'Twould have served you right."

He smiled again and resumed his story.

"By the time I reached the old gate I was dusty as a stage-coach, and this old corduroy suit made me look as much like a tramp as anybody. As I came onto the old man he was waterin' a span of horses at the well. Everything looked about the same, only a little older—he was pretty gray and some thinner—and I calls out kind o' meek-like,

"'Can I get a job here, mister?'"

"He looked me over for a spell, then says: 'No, I'm purty well supplied with hands.'"

"'What you need is a boss,' I says, grinnin'.

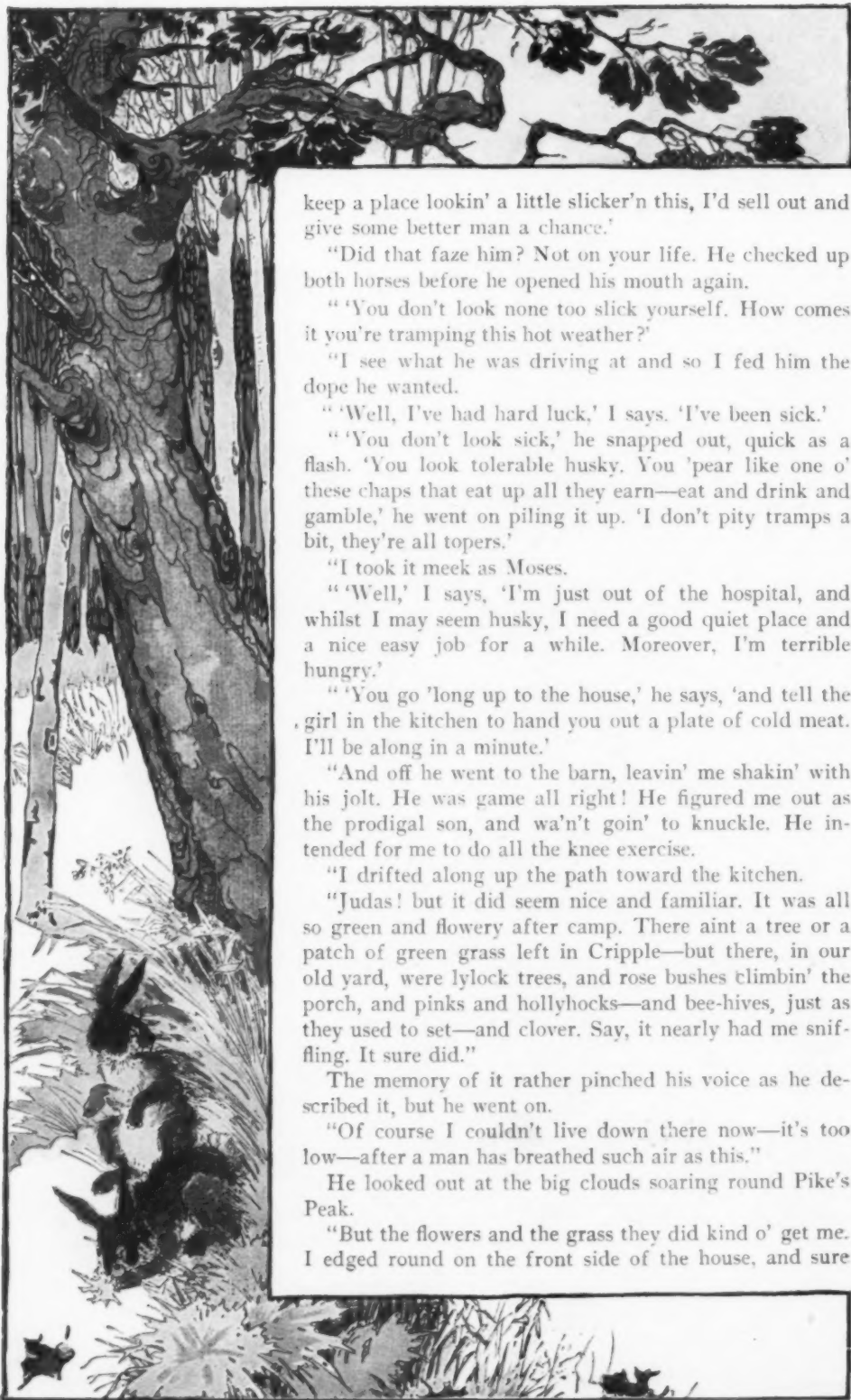
"Then he knew me, but he didn't do no fancy start—he just growled out kind o' surly:

"'I'm competent to do all the bossing on this place,' he says.

"'You may think so,' I joshed him, 'but if I couldn't



"'Stephen,' says Mother, 'here's our son, Edward'"



keep a place lookin' a little slicker'n this, I'd sell out and give some better man a chance.'

"Did that faze him? Not on your life. He checked up both horses before he opened his mouth again.

"You don't look none too slick yourself. How comes it you're tramping this hot weather?"

"I see what he was driving at and so I fed him the dope he wanted.

"Well, I've had hard luck,' I says. 'I've been sick.'

"You don't look sick,' he snapped out, quick as a flash. 'You look tolerable husky. You 'pear like one o' these chaps that eat up all they earn—eat and drink and gamble,' he went on piling it up. 'I don't pity tramps a bit, they're all toppers.'

"I took it meek as Moses.

"Well,' I says, 'I'm just out of the hospital, and whilst I may seem husky, I need a good quiet place and a nice easy job for a while. Moreover, I'm terrible hungry.'

"You go 'long up to the house,' he says, 'and tell the girl in the kitchen to hand you out a plate of cold meat. I'll be along in a minute.'

"And off he went to the barn, leavin' me shakin' with his jolt. He was game all right! He figured me out as the prodigal son, and wa'n't goin' to knuckle. He intended for me to do all the knee exercise.

"I drifted along up the path toward the kitchen.

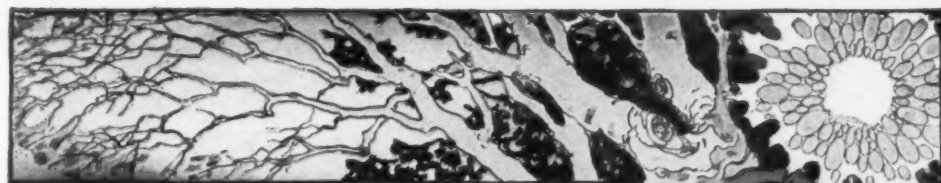
"Judas! but it did seem nice and familiar. It was all so green and flowery after camp. There aint a tree or a patch of green grass left in Cripple—but there, in our old yard, were lylock trees, and rose bushes climbin' the porch, and pinks and hollyhocks—and bee-hives, just as they used to set—and clover. Say, it nearly had me sniffing. It sure did."

The memory of it rather pinched his voice as he described it, but he went on.

"Of course I couldn't live down there now—it's too low—after a man has breathed such air as this."

He looked out at the big clouds soaring round Pike's Peak.

"But the flowers and the grass they did kind o' get me. I edged round on the front side of the house, and sure



enough there set mother, just as she used to—in the same old chair.

"Cap, I want to tell you, I didn't play no circus tricks on her. Her head had grown white as snow and she looked kind o' sad and feeble. I began to understand a little of the worry I'd been to her. I said good-evening—and she turned and looked at me. Then she opened her arms and called out my name."

His voice choked unmistakably this time and it was a minute or two before he resumed.

"No jokes, no lies doing there. I opened right up to her. I told her I'd done well, but that I didn't want father to know it, just yet, and we sit there holding hands when the old man hove round the corner.

"'Stephen,' says mother, kind o' solemn, 'here's our son Edward.'

"Did the old man wilt, or climb the line fence and offer to shake hands? Nitsky! He just shoved one hip onto the edge of the porch and remarked,

"'Does this dry spell reach as fur as where you've been?'"

He broke into silent laughter again and I joined him. This was all so deeply characteristic of the life I had known in my youth that I writhed with delight. I understood the duel of wits and wills. I could see it proceed as my companion chuckled.

"Well, sir, we played that game all the evening. I told of all the bad leases I'd tackled—and how I'd been thrown from a horse and laid up for six months. I brought out every set-back and bruise I'd ever had—all to see if the old man would weaken and feel sorry for me."

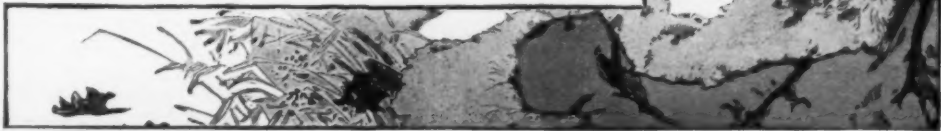
"Did he?"

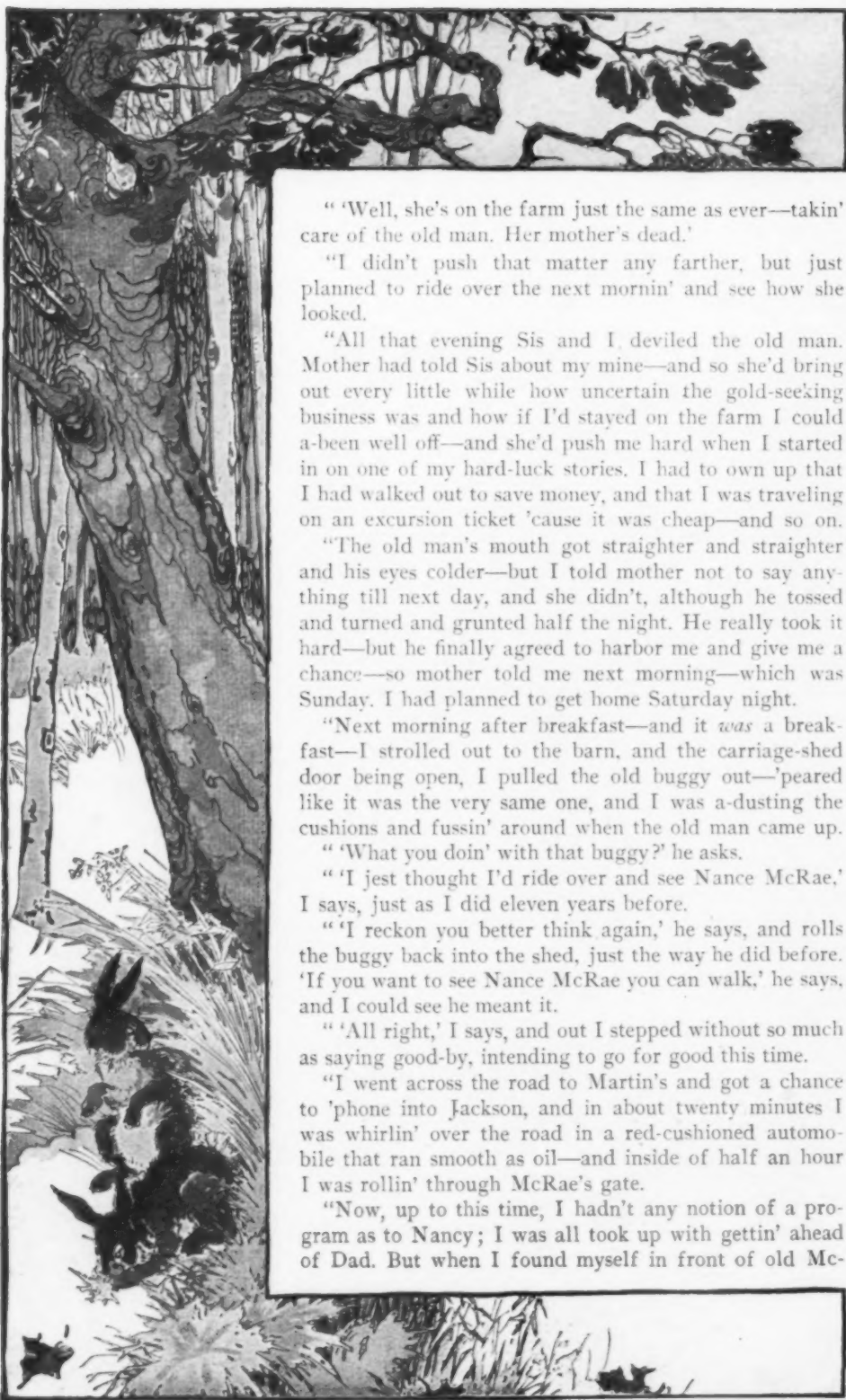
"Not for a minute! And sometimes, as I looked at him, I was sorry I'd come home, but when I was with mother, I was glad. She 'phoned to Sis, who lived in Jackson, and Sis came on the lope, and we had a nice family party.

"Sis touched on Nancy McRae.

"'You remember her?' she asked.

"'I seem to,' I says, kind of slow, as if I was dredgin' my mind to find something.





" 'Well, she's on the farm just the same as ever—takin' care of the old man. Her mother's dead.' "

"I didn't push that matter any farther, but just planned to ride over the next mornin' and see how she looked.

"All that evening Sis and I, deviled the old man. Mother had told Sis about my mine—and so she'd bring out every little while how uncertain the gold-seeking business was and how if I'd stayed on the farm I could a-been well off—and she'd push me hard when I started in on one of my hard-luck stories. I had to own up that I had walked out to save money, and that I was traveling on an excursion ticket 'cause it was cheap—and so on.

"The old man's mouth got straighter and straighter and his eyes colder—but I told mother not to say anything till next day, and she didn't, although he tossed and turned and grunted half the night. He really took it hard—but he finally agreed to harbor me and give me a chance—so mother told me next morning—which was Sunday. I had planned to get home Saturday night.

"Next morning after breakfast—and it *was* a breakfast—I strolled out to the barn, and the carriage-shed door being open, I pulled the old buggy out—'peared like it was the very same one, and I was a-dusting the cushions and fussin' around when the old man came up.

" 'What you doin' with that buggy?' he asks.

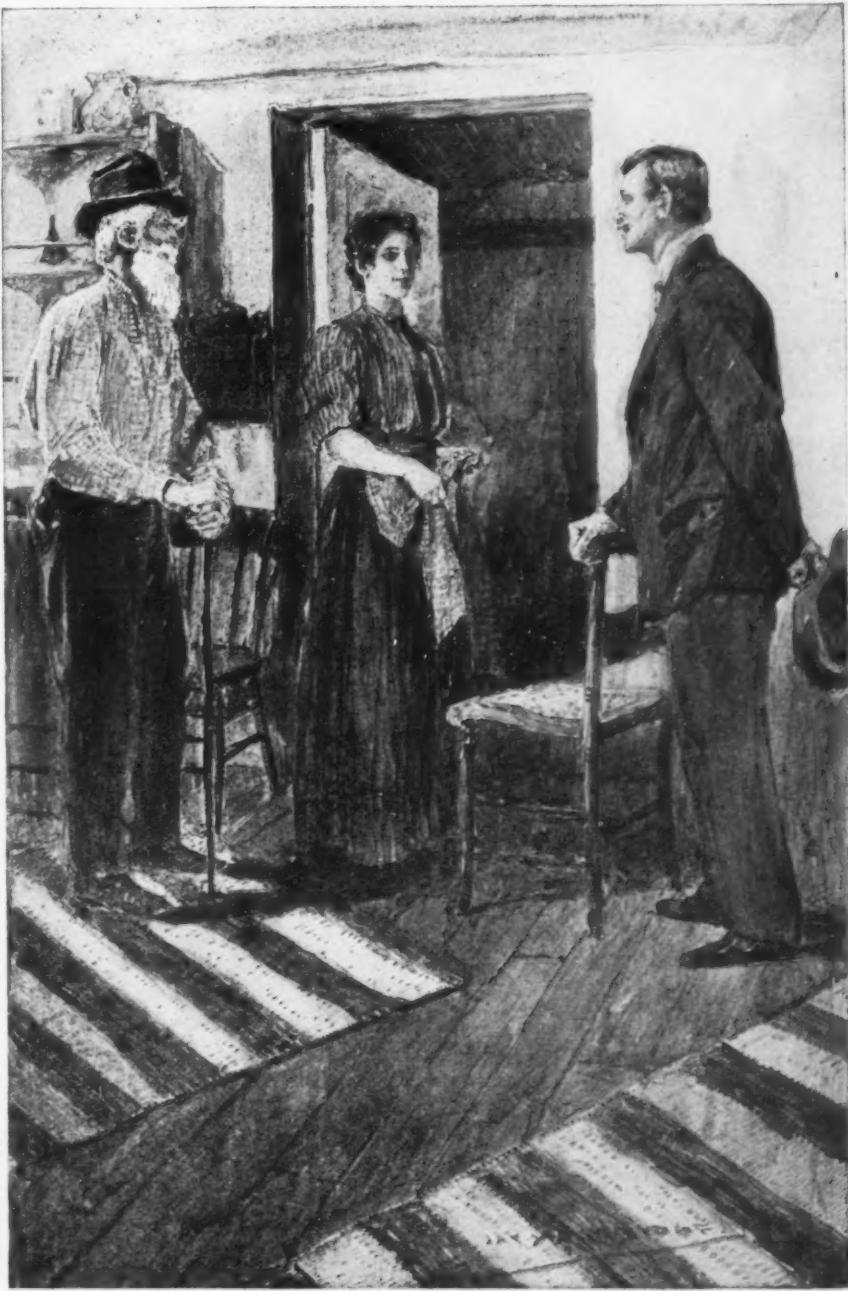
" 'I jest thought I'd ride over and see Nance McRae,' I says, just as I did eleven years before.

" 'I reckon you better think again,' he says, and rolls the buggy back into the shed, just the way he did before. 'If you want to see Nance McRae you can walk,' he says, and I could see he meant it.

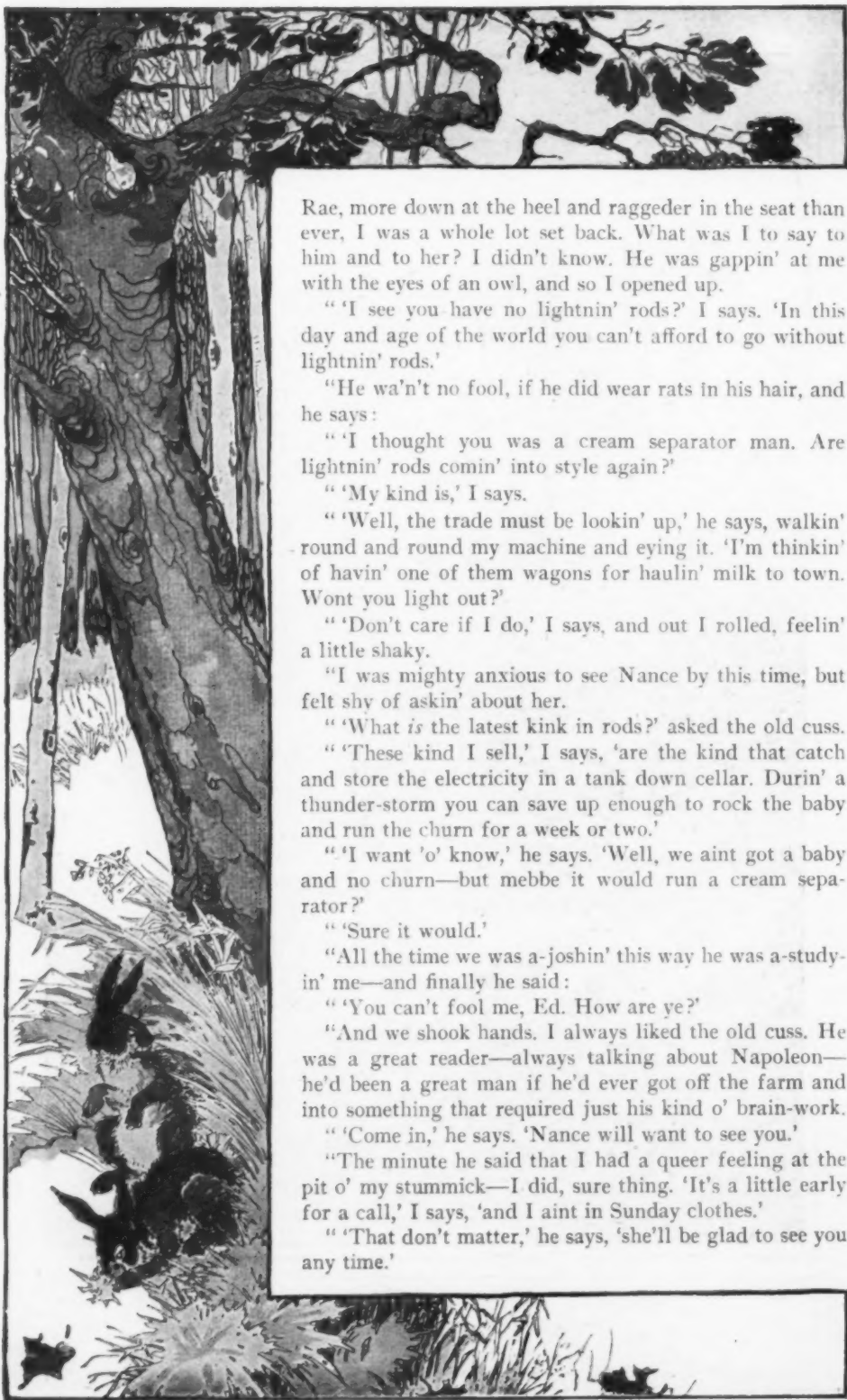
" 'All right,' I says, and out I stepped without so much as saying good-by, intending to go for good this time.

"I went across the road to Martin's and got a chance to 'phone into Jackson, and in about twenty minutes I was whirlin' over the road in a red-cushioned automobile that ran smooth as oil—and inside of half an hour I was rollin' through McRae's gate.

"Now, up to this time, I hadn't any notion of a program as to Nancy; I was all took up with gettin' ahead of Dad. But when I found myself in front of old Mc-



"'I'm glad to see you back, Ed.,' she says"



Rae, more down at the heel and raggeder in the seat than ever, I was a whole lot set back. What was I to say to him and to her? I didn't know. He was gappin' at me with the eyes of an owl, and so I opened up.

"I see you have no lightnin' rods?" I says. 'In this day and age of the world you can't afford to go without lightnin' rods.'

"He wa'n't no fool, if he did wear rats in his hair, and he says:

"I thought you was a cream separator man. Are lightnin' rods comin' into style again?"

"My kind is," I says.

"Well, the trade must be lookin' up," he says, walkin' round and round my machine and eying it. 'I'm thinkin' of havin' one of them wagons for haulin' milk to town. Wont you light out?"

"Don't care if I do," I says, and out I rolled, feelin' a little shaky.

"I was mighty anxious to see Nance by this time, but felt shy of askin' about her.

"What *is* the latest kink in rods?" asked the old cuss.

"These kind I sell," I says, 'are the kind that catch and store the electricity in a tank down cellar. Durin' a thunder-storm you can save up enough to rock the baby and run the churn for a week or two.'

"I want 'o' know," he says. 'Well, we aint got a baby and no churn—but mebbe it would run a cream separator?"

"Sure it would.'

"All the time we was a-joshin' this way he was a-studyin' me—and finally he said:

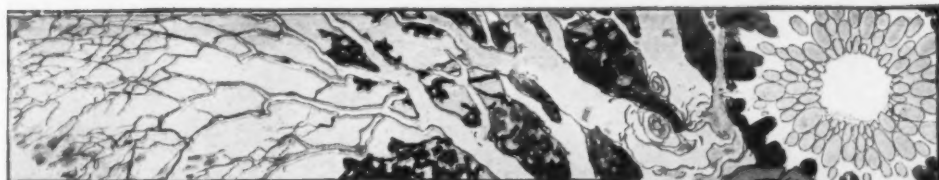
"You can't fool me, Ed. How are ye?"

"And we shook hands. I always liked the old cuss. He was a great reader—always talking about Napoleon—he'd been a great man if he'd ever got off the farm and into something that required just his kind o' brain-work.

"Come in," he says. 'Nance will want to see you.'

"The minute he said that I had a queer feeling at the pit o' my stummick—I did, sure thing. 'It's a little early for a call,' I says, 'and I aint in Sunday clothes.'

"That don't matter," he says, 'she'll be glad to see you any time.'



"You'd a-thought I'd been gone eleven weeks instead of eleven years.

"Nance wasn't a bit like her dad. She always looked ship-shape, no matter what she was a-doing. She was in the kitchen, busy as a gasoline motor when we busted through the door.

" 'Nance!' the old man called out, 'here's Ed Hatch.'

"She didn't do any fancy stunts. She just straightened up and looked at me kind o' steady for a minute and then came over to shake hands.

" 'I'm glad to see you back, Ed,' she says."

The stress of this meeting was still over him as I could see and hear, and I waited for him to go on.

"She hadn't changed as much as mother. She was older and sadder and kind o' subdued and her hand felt calloused, but I'd a-known her anywhere. She was dressed in a blue calico dress, but she was sure handsome still, and I said to her:

" 'You need a change of climate?' I says, 'and a different kind of boss. Colorado's where you ought to be,' I went on.

"For half an hour I kept banterin' her like that, and though she got pink now and then she didn't seem to understand—or if she did she didn't let on. She stuck to her work whilst the old man and me watched her. Seeing her going about that kitchen that way got me locoed. I always liked to watch mother in the kitchen—and Nance was a genuine housekeeper, I always knew that.

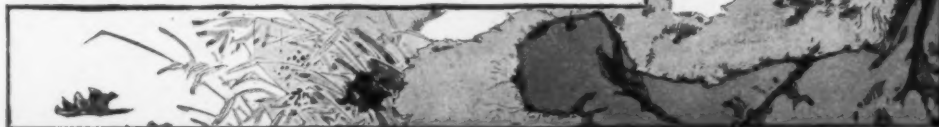
"Finally I says:

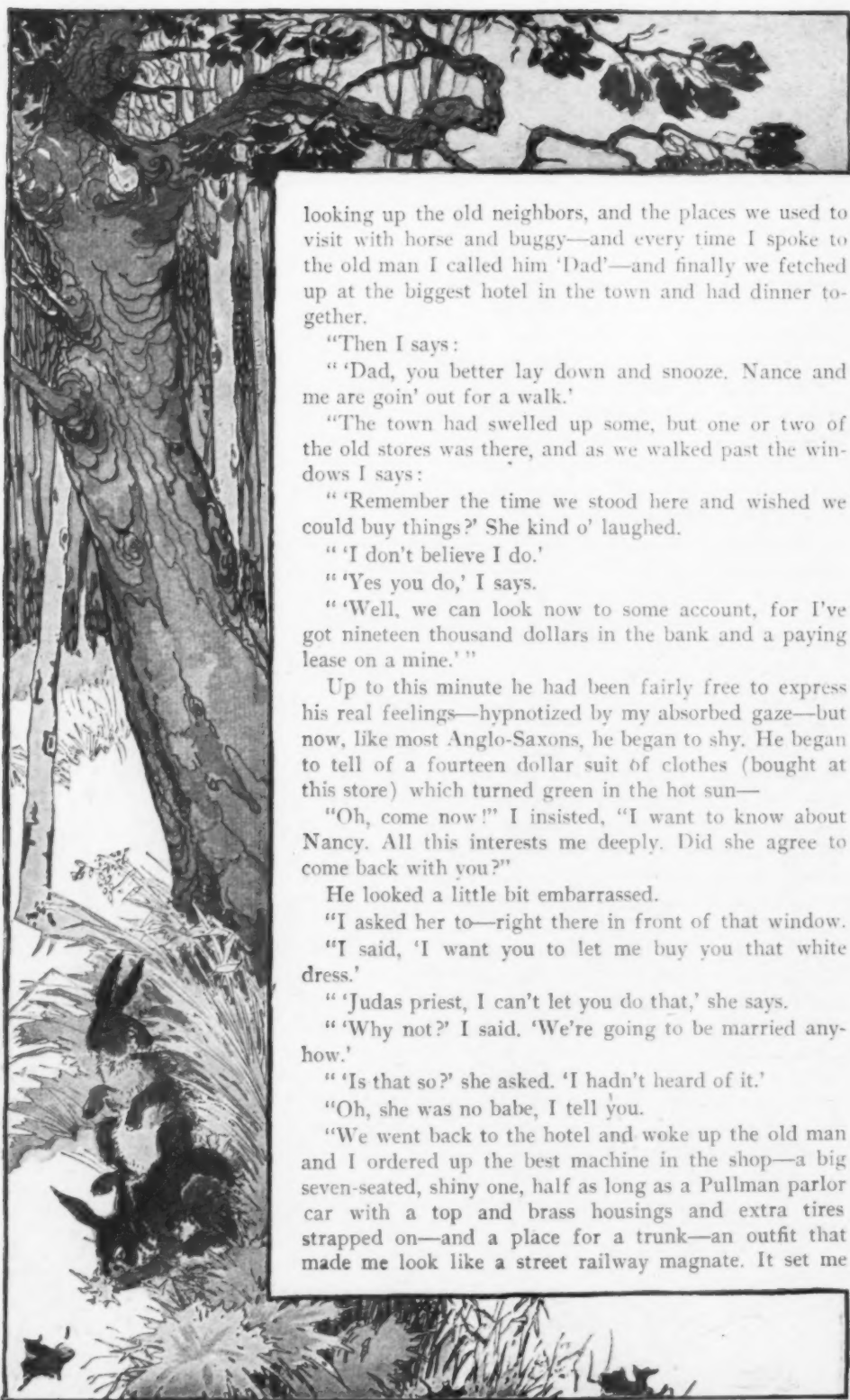
" 'I haint got any buggy, Nance—the old man wouldn't let me have one last Sunday—I mean eleven years ago—that's what threw me off the track—but I've got a forty horse-power car out here. Suppose you put on your best apron and take a ride with me.'

"She made some words as women will, but she got ready, and she did look handsomer than ever as she came out. She was excited, I could see that, but she was all there! No juggling or fussing.

" 'Climb in the front seat, Dad,' I says. 'It's me and Nance to the private box. Turn on the juice,' I says to the driver.

"Well, sir, we burned up all the grease in the box





looking up the old neighbors, and the places we used to visit with horse and buggy—and every time I spoke to the old man I called him ‘Dad’—and finally we fetched up at the biggest hotel in the town and had dinner together.

“Then I says:

“‘Dad, you better lay down and snooze. Nance and me are goin’ out for a walk.’

“The town had swelled up some, but one or two of the old stores was there, and as we walked past the windows I says:

“‘Remember the time we stood here and wished we could buy things?’ She kind o’ laughed.

“‘I don’t believe I do.’

“‘Yes you do,’ I says.

“‘Well, we can look now to some account, for I’ve got nineteen thousand dollars in the bank and a paying lease on a mine.’”

Up to this minute he had been fairly free to express his real feelings—hypnotized by my absorbed gaze—but now, like most Anglo-Saxons, he began to shy. He began to tell of a fourteen dollar suit of clothes (bought at this store) which turned green in the hot sun—

“Oh, come now!” I insisted, “I want to know about Nancy. All this interests me deeply. Did she agree to come back with you?”

He looked a little bit embarrassed.

“I asked her to—right there in front of that window.

“I said, ‘I want you to let me buy you that white dress.’

“‘Judas priest, I can’t let you do that,’ she says.

“‘Why not?’ I said. ‘We’re going to be married anyhow.’

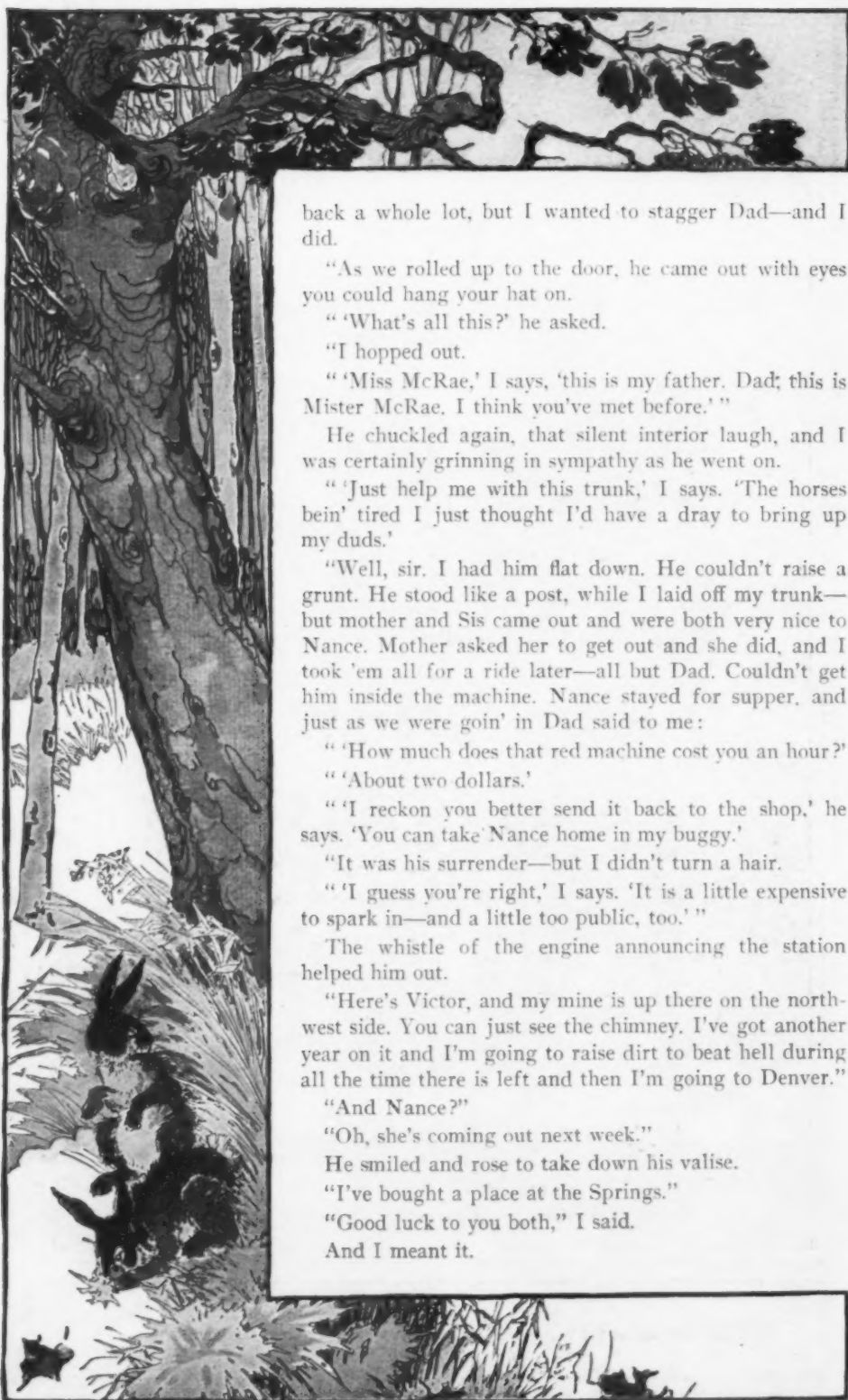
“‘Is that so?’ she asked. ‘I hadn’t heard of it.’

“Oh, she was no babe, I tell you.

“We went back to the hotel and woke up the old man and I ordered up the best machine in the shop—a big seven-seated, shiny one, half as long as a Pullman parlor car with a top and brass housings and extra tires strapped on—and a place for a trunk—an outfit that made me look like a street railway magnate. It set me



"Remember the time we stood here and wished we could buy things?"



back a whole lot, but I wanted to stagger Dad—and I did.

"As we rolled up to the door, he came out with eyes, you could hang your hat on.

"What's all this?" he asked.

"I hopped out.

"Miss McRae," I says, "this is my father. Dad; this is Mister McRae. I think you've met before."

He chuckled again, that silent interior laugh, and I was certainly grinning in sympathy as he went on.

"Just help me with this trunk," I says. "The horses bein' tired I just thought I'd have a dray to bring up my duds."

"Well, sir, I had him flat down. He couldn't raise a grunt. He stood like a post, while I laid off my trunk—but mother and Sis came out and were both very nice to Nance. Mother asked her to get out and she did, and I took 'em all for a ride later—all but Dad. Couldn't get him inside the machine. Nance stayed for supper, and just as we were goin' in Dad said to me:

"How much does that red machine cost you an hour?"

"About two dollars."

"I reckon you better send it back to the shop," he says. "You can take Nance home in my buggy."

"It was his surrender—but I didn't turn a hair.

"I guess you're right," I says. "It is a little expensive to spark in—and a little too public, too."

The whistle of the engine announcing the station helped him out.

"Here's Victor, and my mine is up there on the northwest side. You can just see the chimney. I've got another year on it and I'm going to raise dirt to beat hell during all the time there is left and then I'm going to Denver."

"And Nance?"

"Oh, she's coming out next week."

He smiled and rose to take down his valise.

"I've bought a place at the Springs."

"Good luck to you both," I said.

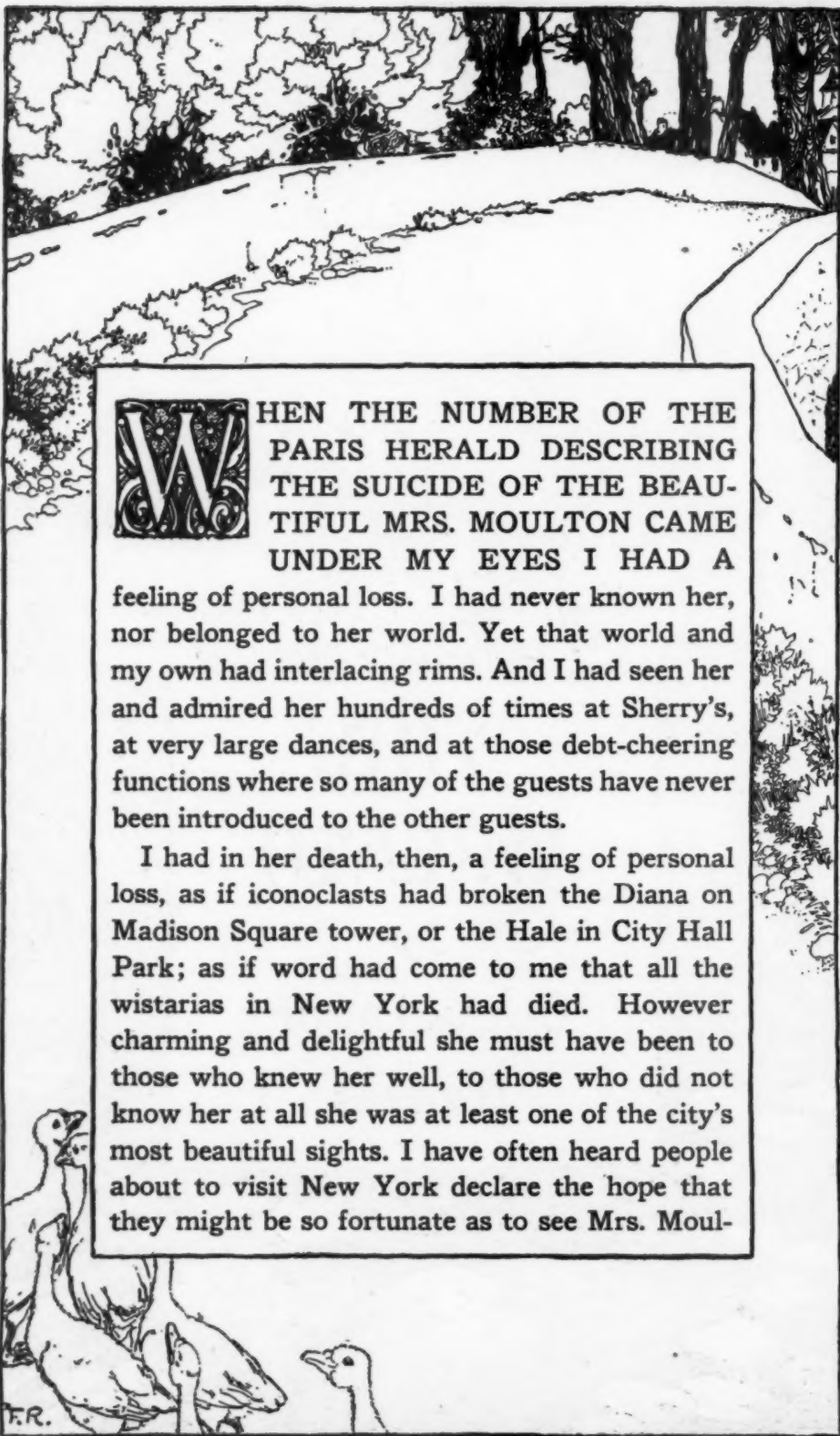
And I meant it.



In The
Old Print Shop

THE
WREATH
by
Gouverneur
Morris

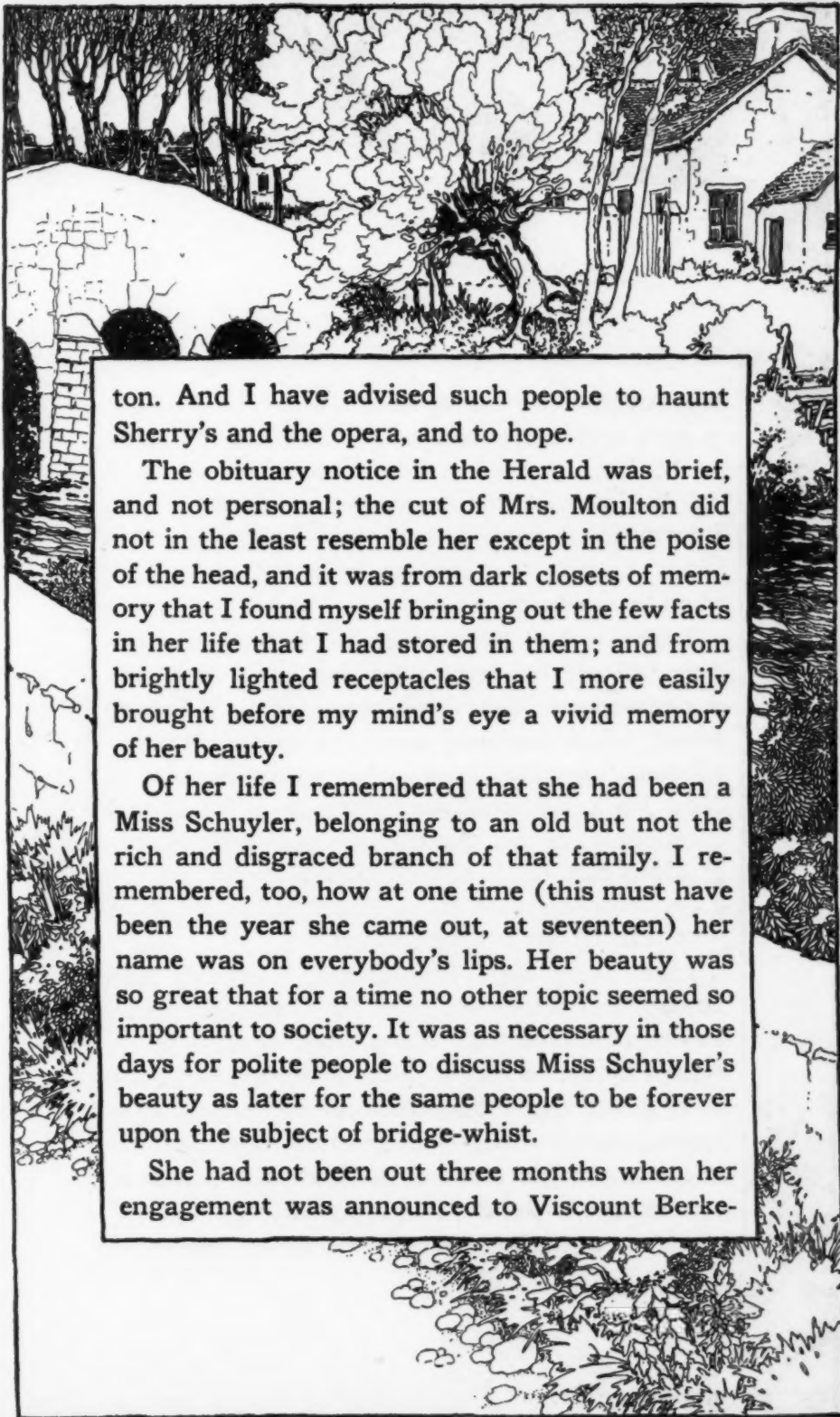
E.R.



**HEN THE NUMBER OF THE
PARIS HERALD DESCRIBING
THE SUICIDE OF THE BEAU-
TIFUL MRS. MOULTON CAME
UNDER MY EYES I HAD A**

feeling of personal loss. I had never known her, nor belonged to her world. Yet that world and my own had interlacing rims. And I had seen her and admired her hundreds of times at Sherry's, at very large dances, and at those debt-cheering functions where so many of the guests have never been introduced to the other guests.

I had in her death, then, a feeling of personal loss, as if iconoclasts had broken the Diana on Madison Square tower, or the Hale in City Hall Park; as if word had come to me that all the wistarias in New York had died. However charming and delightful she must have been to those who knew her well, to those who did not know her at all she was at least one of the city's most beautiful sights. I have often heard people about to visit New York declare the hope that they might be so fortunate as to see Mrs. Moul-

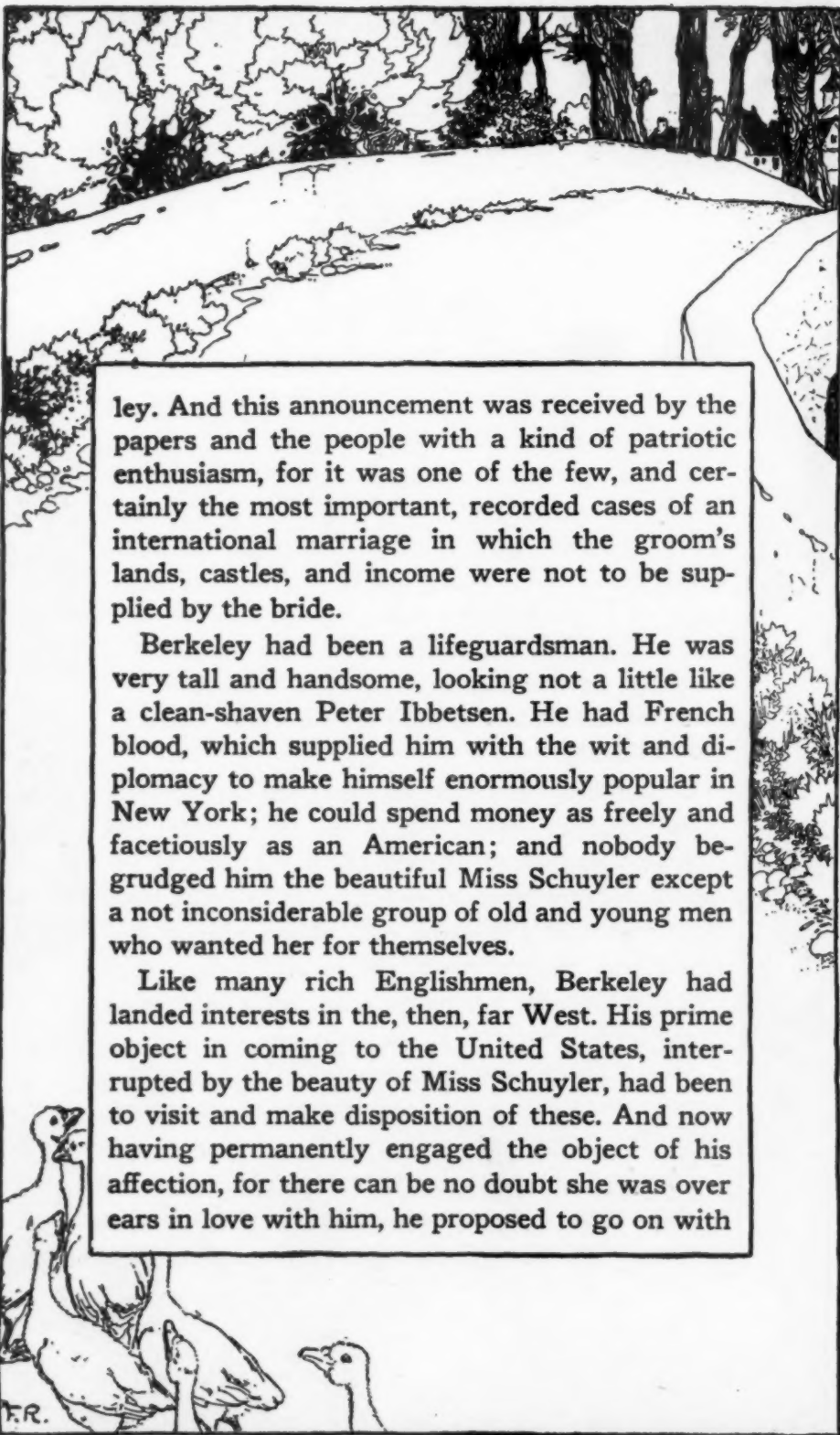


ton. And I have advised such people to haunt Sherry's and the opera, and to hope.

The obituary notice in the Herald was brief, and not personal; the cut of Mrs. Moulton did not in the least resemble her except in the poise of the head, and it was from dark closets of memory that I found myself bringing out the few facts in her life that I had stored in them; and from brightly lighted receptacles that I more easily brought before my mind's eye a vivid memory of her beauty.

Of her life I remembered that she had been a Miss Schuyler, belonging to an old but not the rich and disgraced branch of that family. I remembered, too, how at one time (this must have been the year she came out, at seventeen) her name was on everybody's lips. Her beauty was so great that for a time no other topic seemed so important to society. It was as necessary in those days for polite people to discuss Miss Schuyler's beauty as later for the same people to be forever upon the subject of bridge-whist.

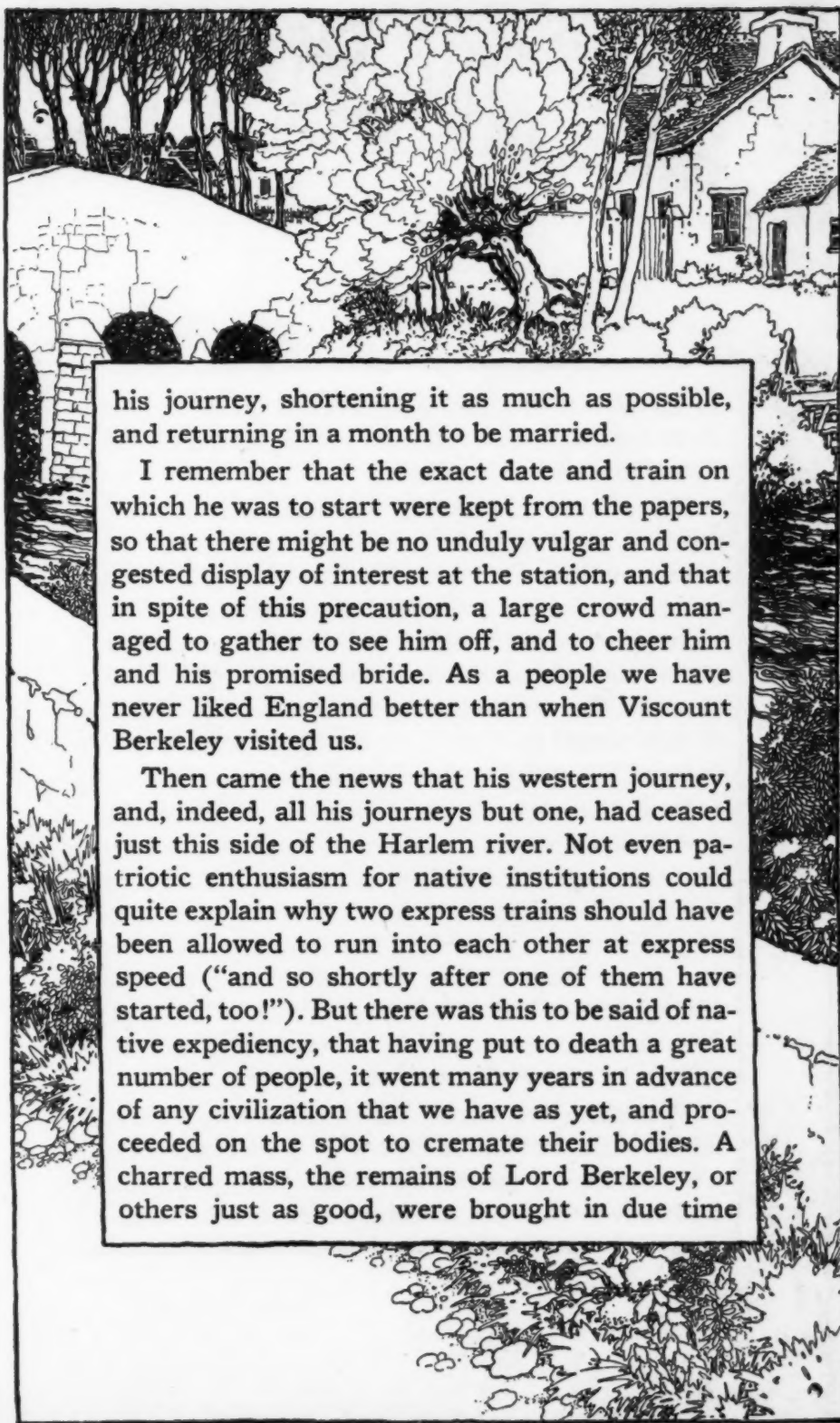
She had not been out three months when her engagement was announced to Viscount Berke-



ley. And this announcement was received by the papers and the people with a kind of patriotic enthusiasm, for it was one of the few, and certainly the most important, recorded cases of an international marriage in which the groom's lands, castles, and income were not to be supplied by the bride.

Berkeley had been a lifeguardsman. He was very tall and handsome, looking not a little like a clean-shaven Peter Ibbetsen. He had French blood, which supplied him with the wit and diplomacy to make himself enormously popular in New York; he could spend money as freely and facetiously as an American; and nobody begrudged him the beautiful Miss Schuyler except a not inconsiderable group of old and young men who wanted her for themselves.

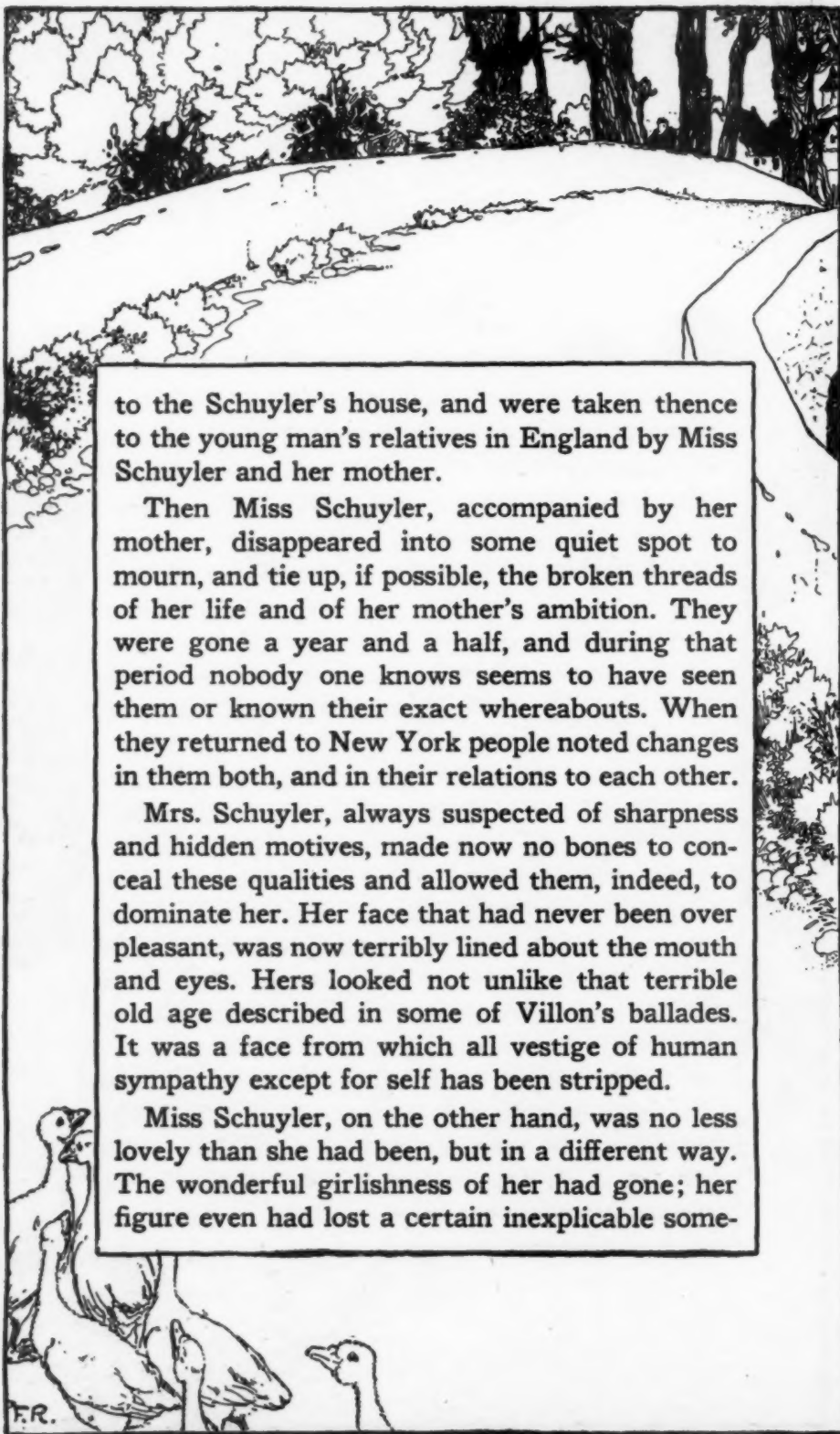
Like many rich Englishmen, Berkeley had landed interests in the, then, far West. His prime object in coming to the United States, interrupted by the beauty of Miss Schuyler, had been to visit and make disposition of these. And now having permanently engaged the object of his affection, for there can be no doubt she was over ears in love with him, he proposed to go on with



his journey, shortening it as much as possible, and returning in a month to be married.

I remember that the exact date and train on which he was to start were kept from the papers, so that there might be no unduly vulgar and congested display of interest at the station, and that in spite of this precaution, a large crowd managed to gather to see him off, and to cheer him and his promised bride. As a people we have never liked England better than when Viscount Berkeley visited us.

Then came the news that his western journey, and, indeed, all his journeys but one, had ceased just this side of the Harlem river. Not even patriotic enthusiasm for native institutions could quite explain why two express trains should have been allowed to run into each other at express speed ("and so shortly after one of them have started, too!"). But there was this to be said of native expediency, that having put to death a great number of people, it went many years in advance of any civilization that we have as yet, and proceeded on the spot to cremate their bodies. A charred mass, the remains of Lord Berkeley, or others just as good, were brought in due time

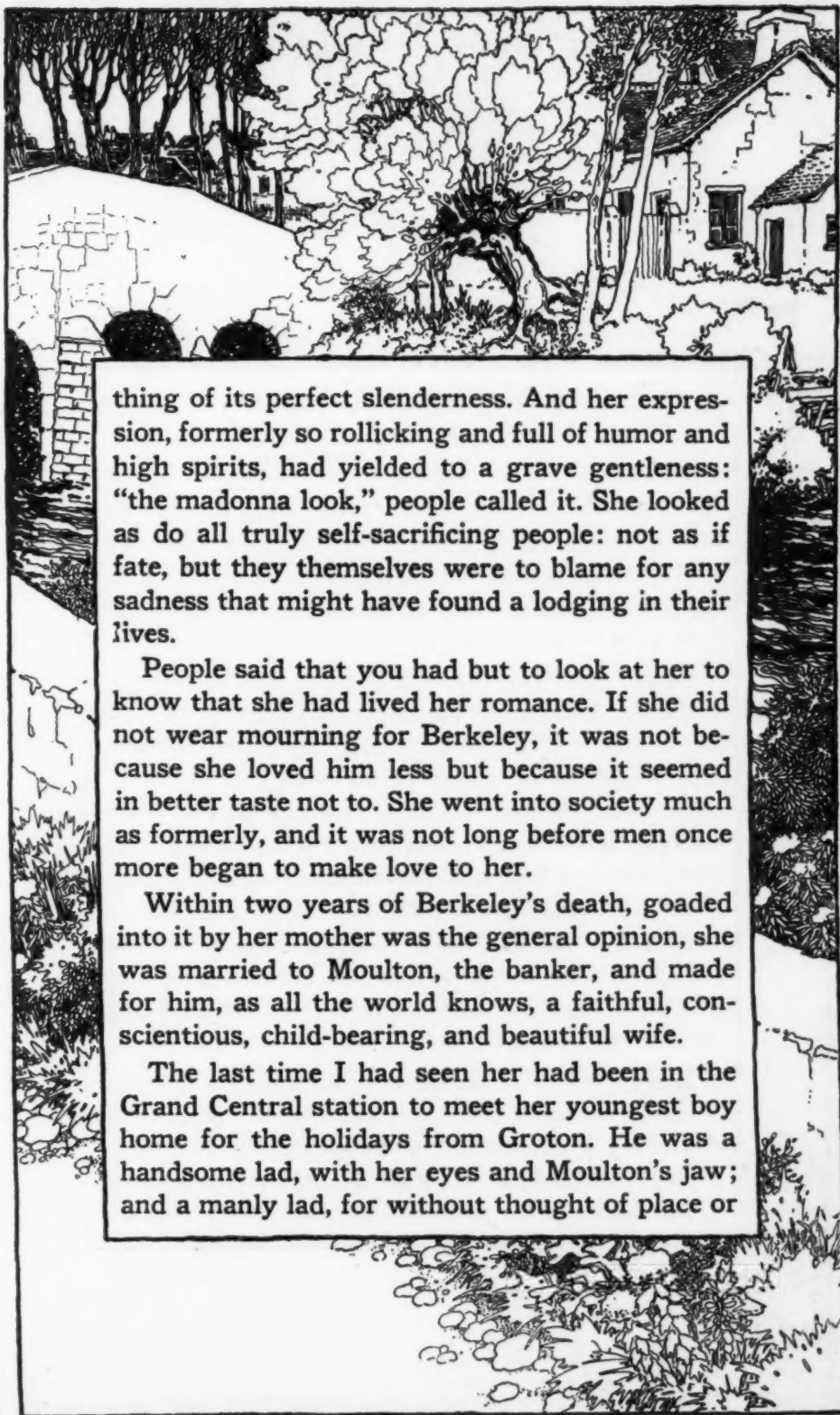


to the Schuyler's house, and were taken thence to the young man's relatives in England by Miss Schuyler and her mother.

Then Miss Schuyler, accompanied by her mother, disappeared into some quiet spot to mourn, and tie up, if possible, the broken threads of her life and of her mother's ambition. They were gone a year and a half, and during that period nobody one knows seems to have seen them or known their exact whereabouts. When they returned to New York people noted changes in them both, and in their relations to each other.

Mrs. Schuyler, always suspected of sharpness and hidden motives, made now no bones to conceal these qualities and allowed them, indeed, to dominate her. Her face that had never been over pleasant, was now terribly lined about the mouth and eyes. Hers looked not unlike that terrible old age described in some of Villon's ballades. It was a face from which all vestige of human sympathy except for self has been stripped.

Miss Schuyler, on the other hand, was no less lovely than she had been, but in a different way. The wonderful girlishness of her had gone; her figure even had lost a certain inexplicable some-

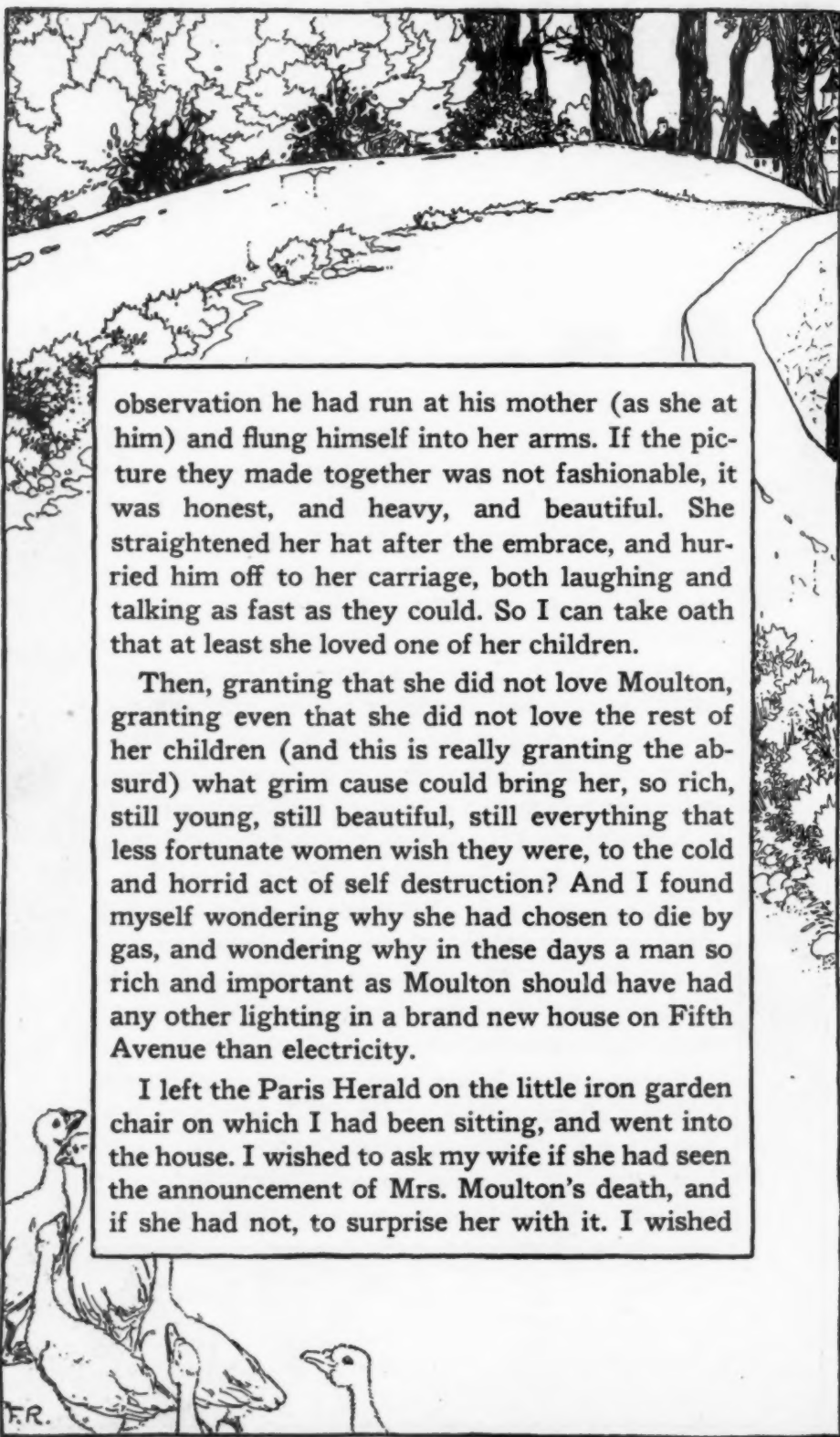


thing of its perfect slenderness. And her expression, formerly so rollicking and full of humor and high spirits, had yielded to a grave gentleness: "the madonna look," people called it. She looked as do all truly self-sacrificing people: not as if fate, but they themselves were to blame for any sadness that might have found a lodging in their lives.

People said that you had but to look at her to know that she had lived her romance. If she did not wear mourning for Berkeley, it was not because she loved him less but because it seemed in better taste not to. She went into society much as formerly, and it was not long before men once more began to make love to her.

Within two years of Berkeley's death, goaded into it by her mother was the general opinion, she was married to Moulton, the banker, and made for him, as all the world knows, a faithful, conscientious, child-bearing, and beautiful wife.

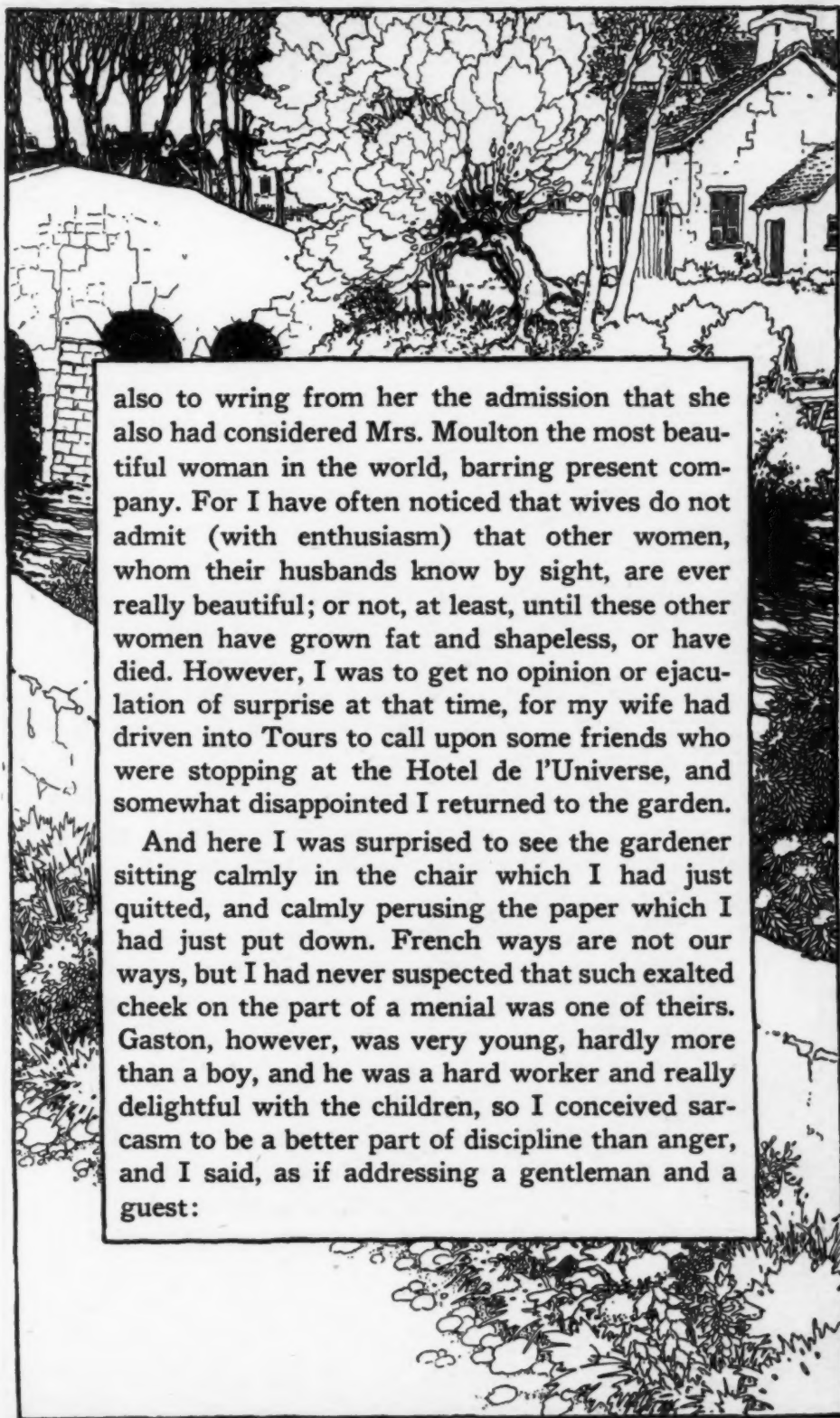
The last time I had seen her had been in the Grand Central station to meet her youngest boy home for the holidays from Groton. He was a handsome lad, with her eyes and Moulton's jaw; and a manly lad, for without thought of place or



observation he had run at his mother (as she at him) and flung himself into her arms. If the picture they made together was not fashionable, it was honest, and heavy, and beautiful. She straightened her hat after the embrace, and hurried him off to her carriage, both laughing and talking as fast as they could. So I can take oath that at least she loved one of her children.

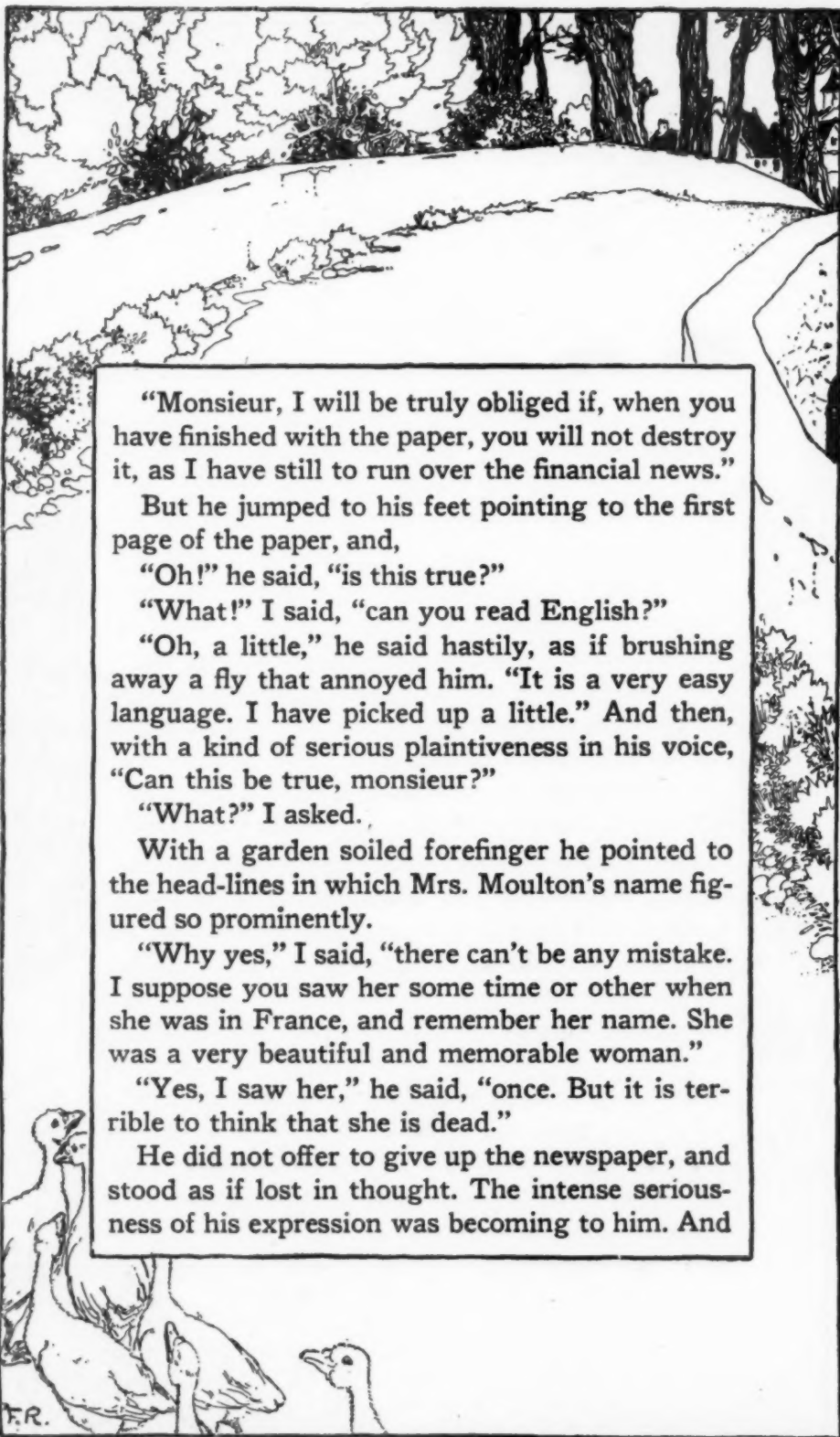
Then, granting that she did not love Moulton, granting even that she did not love the rest of her children (and this is really granting the absurd) what grim cause could bring her, so rich, still young, still beautiful, still everything that less fortunate women wish they were, to the cold and horrid act of self destruction? And I found myself wondering why she had chosen to die by gas, and wondering why in these days a man so rich and important as Moulton should have had any other lighting in a brand new house on Fifth Avenue than electricity.

I left the Paris Herald on the little iron garden chair on which I had been sitting, and went into the house. I wished to ask my wife if she had seen the announcement of Mrs. Moulton's death, and if she had not, to surprise her with it. I wished



also to wring from her the admission that she also had considered Mrs. Moulton the most beautiful woman in the world, barring present company. For I have often noticed that wives do not admit (with enthusiasm) that other women, whom their husbands know by sight, are ever really beautiful; or not, at least, until these other women have grown fat and shapeless, or have died. However, I was to get no opinion or ejaculation of surprise at that time, for my wife had driven into Tours to call upon some friends who were stopping at the Hotel de l'Universe, and somewhat disappointed I returned to the garden.

And here I was surprised to see the gardener sitting calmly in the chair which I had just quitted, and calmly perusing the paper which I had just put down. French ways are not our ways, but I had never suspected that such exalted cheek on the part of a menial was one of theirs. Gaston, however, was very young, hardly more than a boy, and he was a hard worker and really delightful with the children, so I conceived sarcasm to be a better part of discipline than anger, and I said, as if addressing a gentleman and a guest:



"Monsieur, I will be truly obliged if, when you have finished with the paper, you will not destroy it, as I have still to run over the financial news."

But he jumped to his feet pointing to the first page of the paper, and,

"Oh!" he said, "is this true?"

"What!" I said, "can you read English?"

"Oh, a little," he said hastily, as if brushing away a fly that annoyed him. "It is a very easy language. I have picked up a little." And then, with a kind of serious plaintiveness in his voice, "Can this be true, monsieur?"

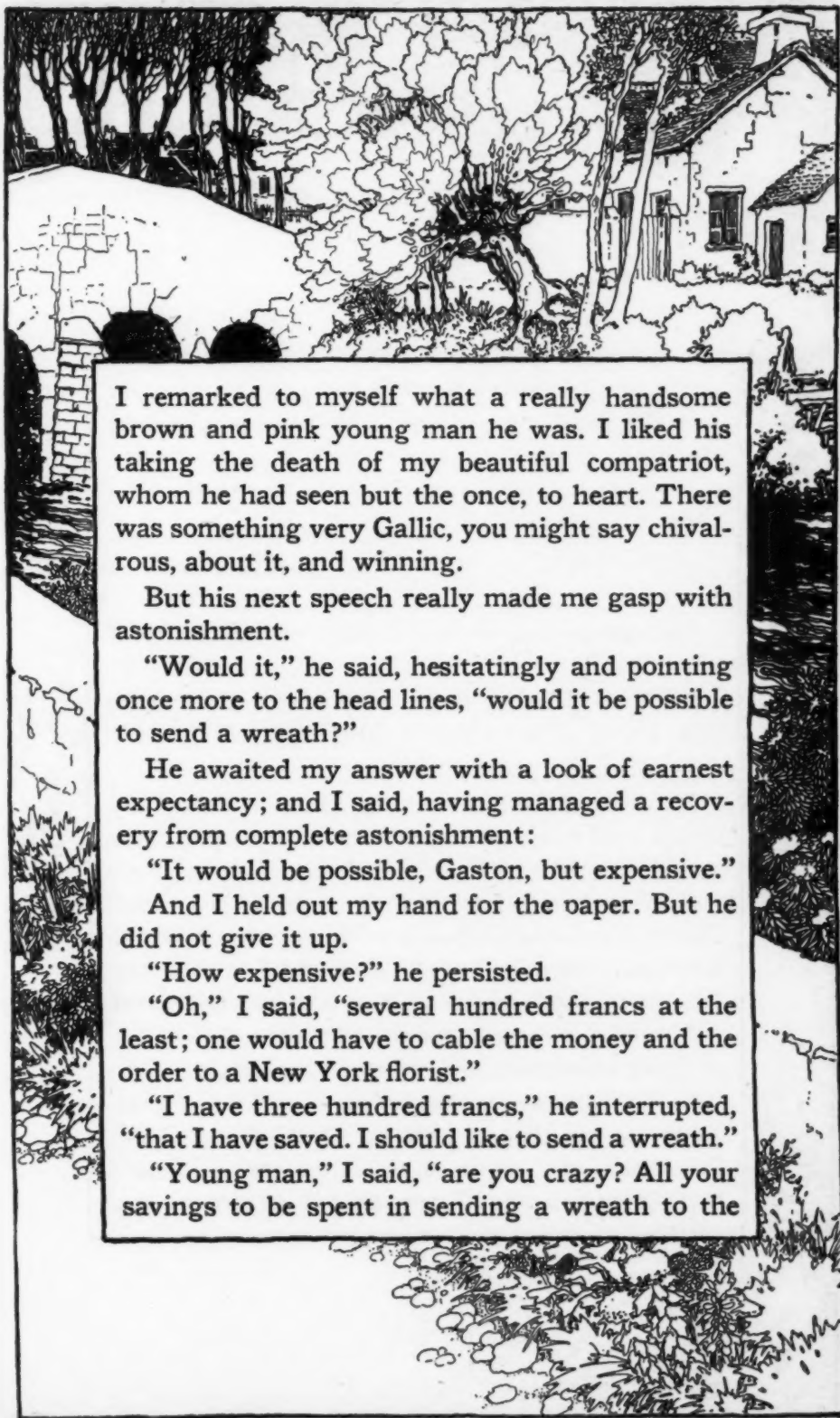
"What?" I asked.

With a garden soiled forefinger he pointed to the head-lines in which Mrs. Moulton's name figured so prominently.

"Why yes," I said, "there can't be any mistake. I suppose you saw her some time or other when she was in France, and remember her name. She was a very beautiful and memorable woman."

"Yes, I saw her," he said, "once. But it is terrible to think that she is dead."

He did not offer to give up the newspaper, and stood as if lost in thought. The intense seriousness of his expression was becoming to him. And



I remarked to myself what a really handsome brown and pink young man he was. I liked his taking the death of my beautiful compatriot, whom he had seen but the once, to heart. There was something very Gallic, you might say chivalrous, about it, and winning.

But his next speech really made me gasp with astonishment.

"Would it," he said, hesitatingly and pointing once more to the head lines, "would it be possible to send a wreath?"

He awaited my answer with a look of earnest expectancy; and I said, having managed a recovery from complete astonishment:

"It would be possible, Gaston, but expensive."

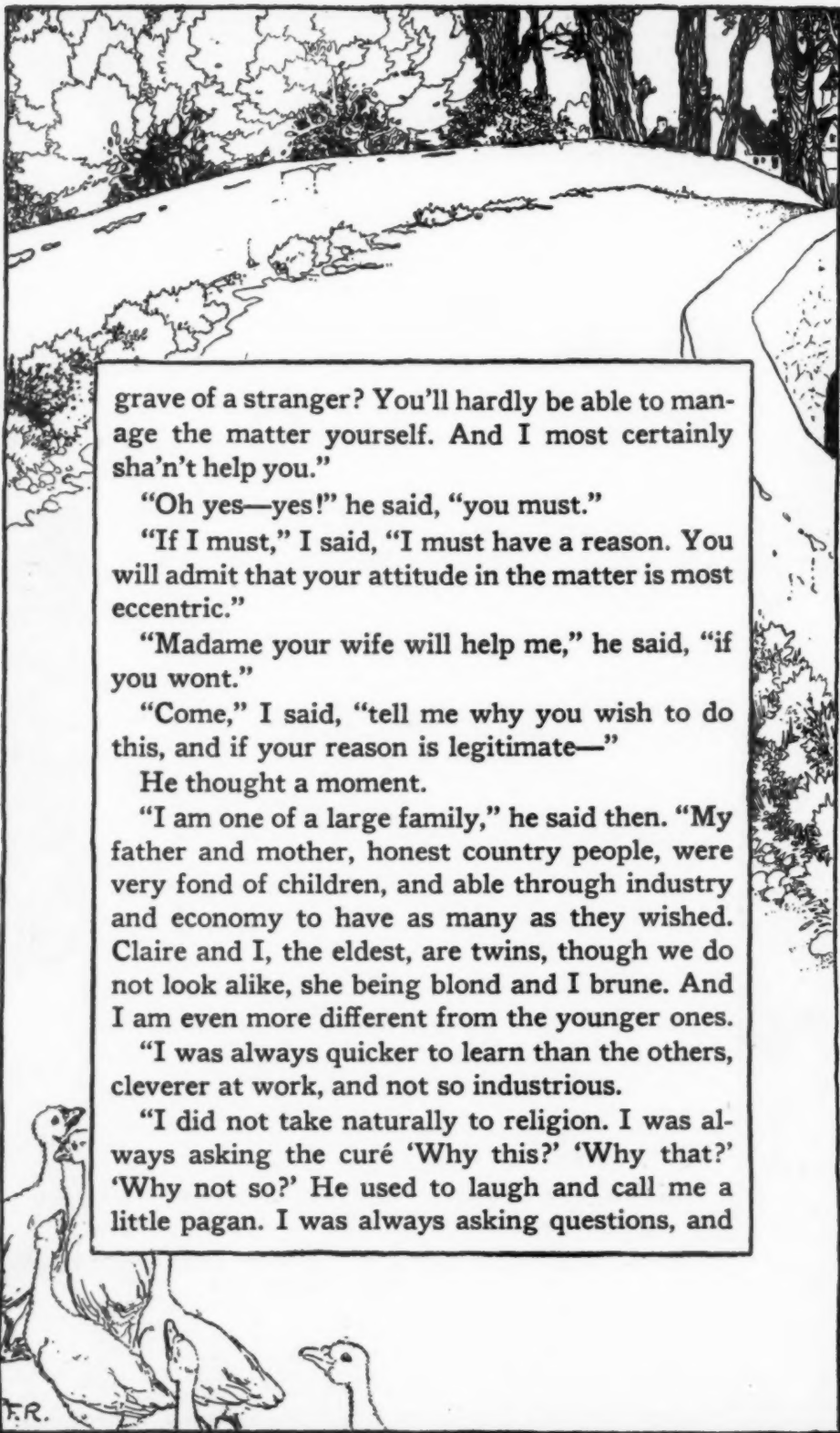
And I held out my hand for the paper. But he did not give it up.

"How expensive?" he persisted.

"Oh," I said, "several hundred francs at the least; one would have to cable the money and the order to a New York florist."

"I have three hundred francs," he interrupted, "that I have saved. I should like to send a wreath."

"Young man," I said, "are you crazy? All your savings to be spent in sending a wreath to the



grave of a stranger? You'll hardly be able to manage the matter yourself. And I most certainly sha'n't help you."

"Oh yes—yes!" he said, "you must."

"If I must," I said, "I must have a reason. You will admit that your attitude in the matter is most eccentric."

"Madame your wife will help me," he said, "if you wont."

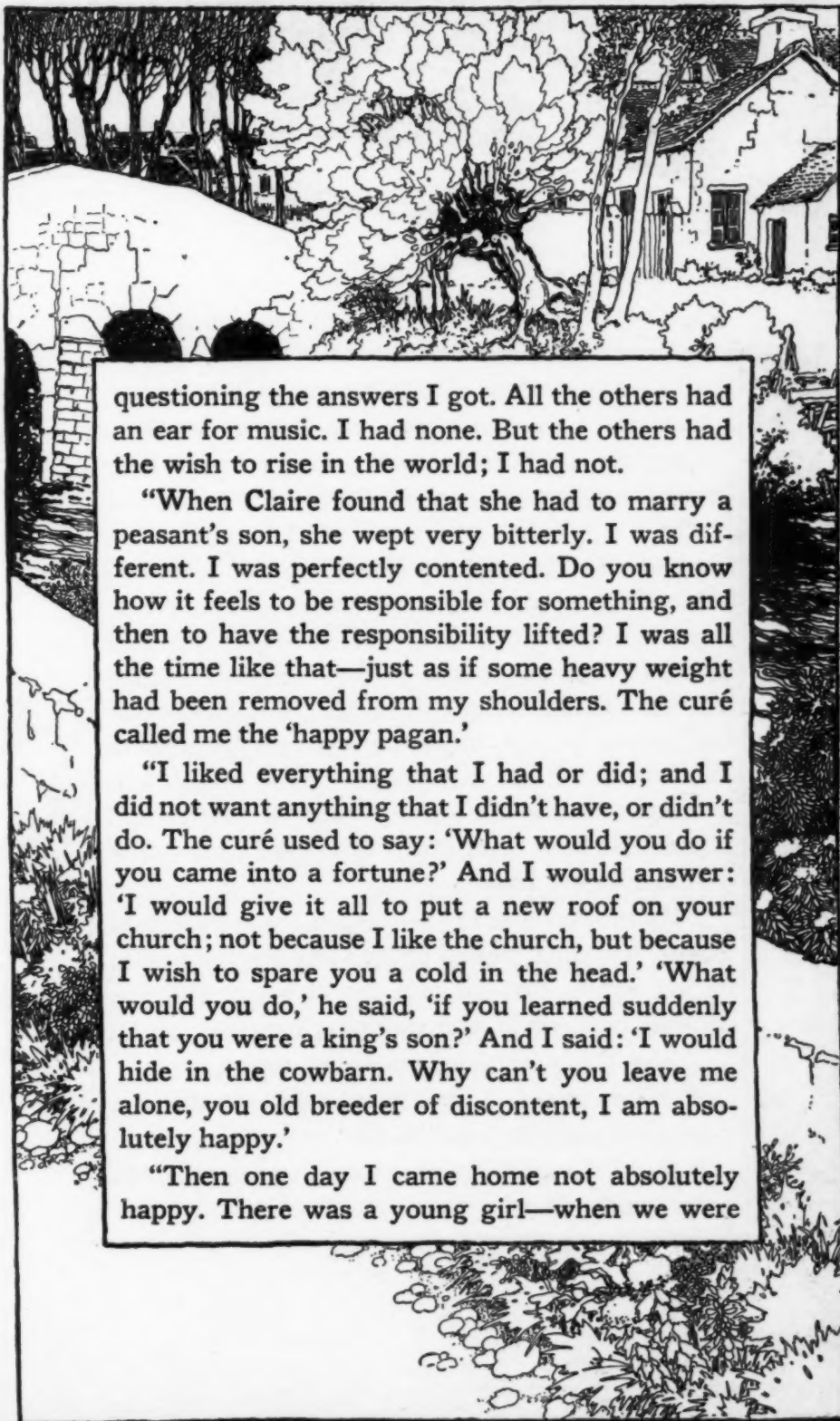
"Come," I said, "tell me why you wish to do this, and if your reason is legitimate—"

He thought a moment.

"I am one of a large family," he said then. "My father and mother, honest country people, were very fond of children, and able through industry and economy to have as many as they wished. Claire and I, the eldest, are twins, though we do not look alike, she being blond and I brune. And I am even more different from the younger ones.

"I was always quicker to learn than the others, cleverer at work, and not so industrious.

"I did not take naturally to religion. I was always asking the curé 'Why this?' 'Why that?' 'Why not so?' He used to laugh and call me a little pagan. I was always asking questions, and

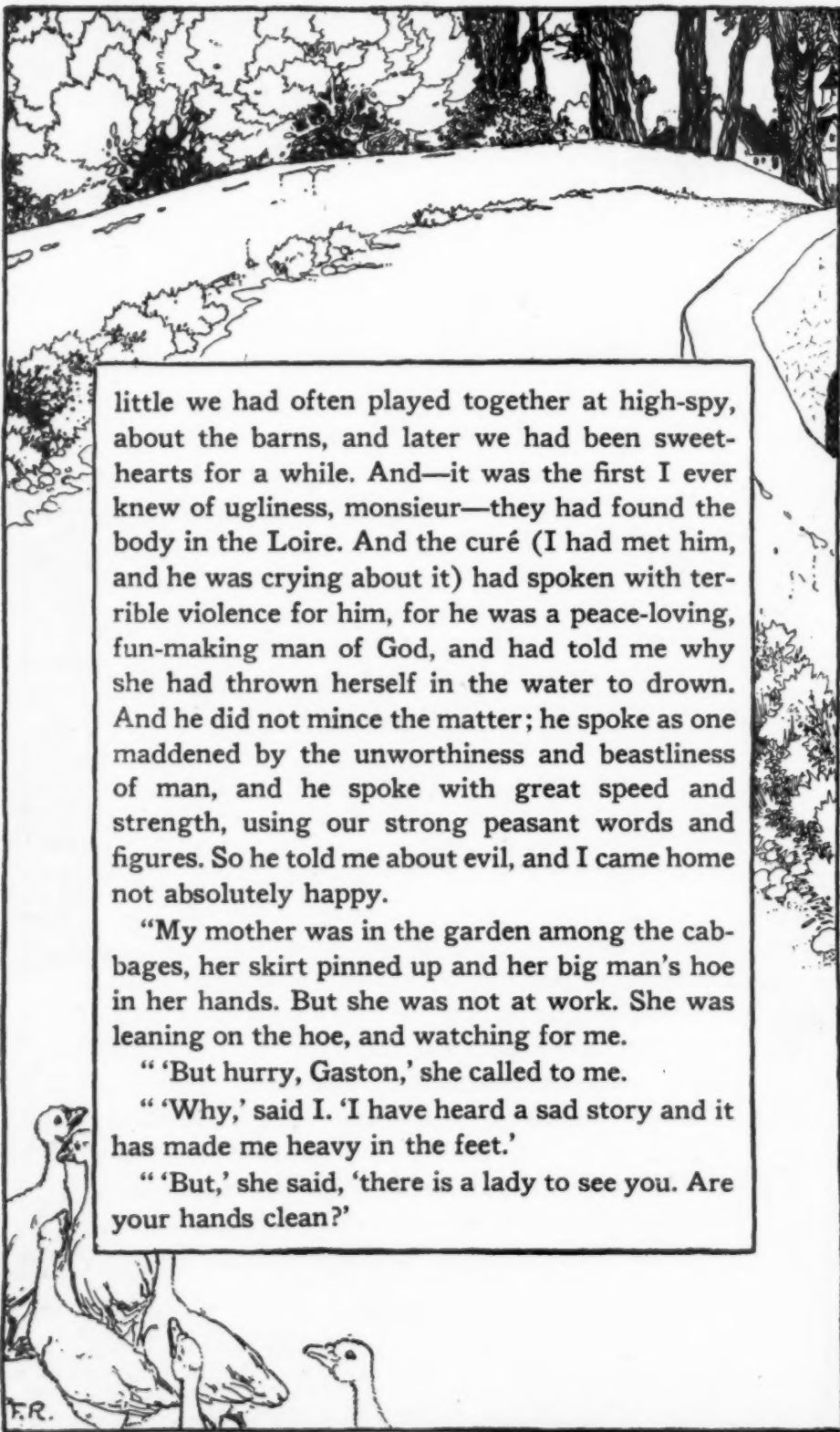


questioning the answers I got. All the others had an ear for music. I had none. But the others had the wish to rise in the world; I had not.

"When Claire found that she had to marry a peasant's son, she wept very bitterly. I was different. I was perfectly contented. Do you know how it feels to be responsible for something, and then to have the responsibility lifted? I was all the time like that—just as if some heavy weight had been removed from my shoulders. The curé called me the 'happy pagan.'

"I liked everything that I had or did; and I did not want anything that I didn't have, or didn't do. The curé used to say: 'What would you do if you came into a fortune?' And I would answer: 'I would give it all to put a new roof on your church; not because I like the church, but because I wish to spare you a cold in the head.' 'What would you do,' he said, 'if you learned suddenly that you were a king's son?' And I said: 'I would hide in the cowbarn. Why can't you leave me alone, you old breeder of discontent, I am absolutely happy.'

"Then one day I came home not absolutely happy. There was a young girl—when we were



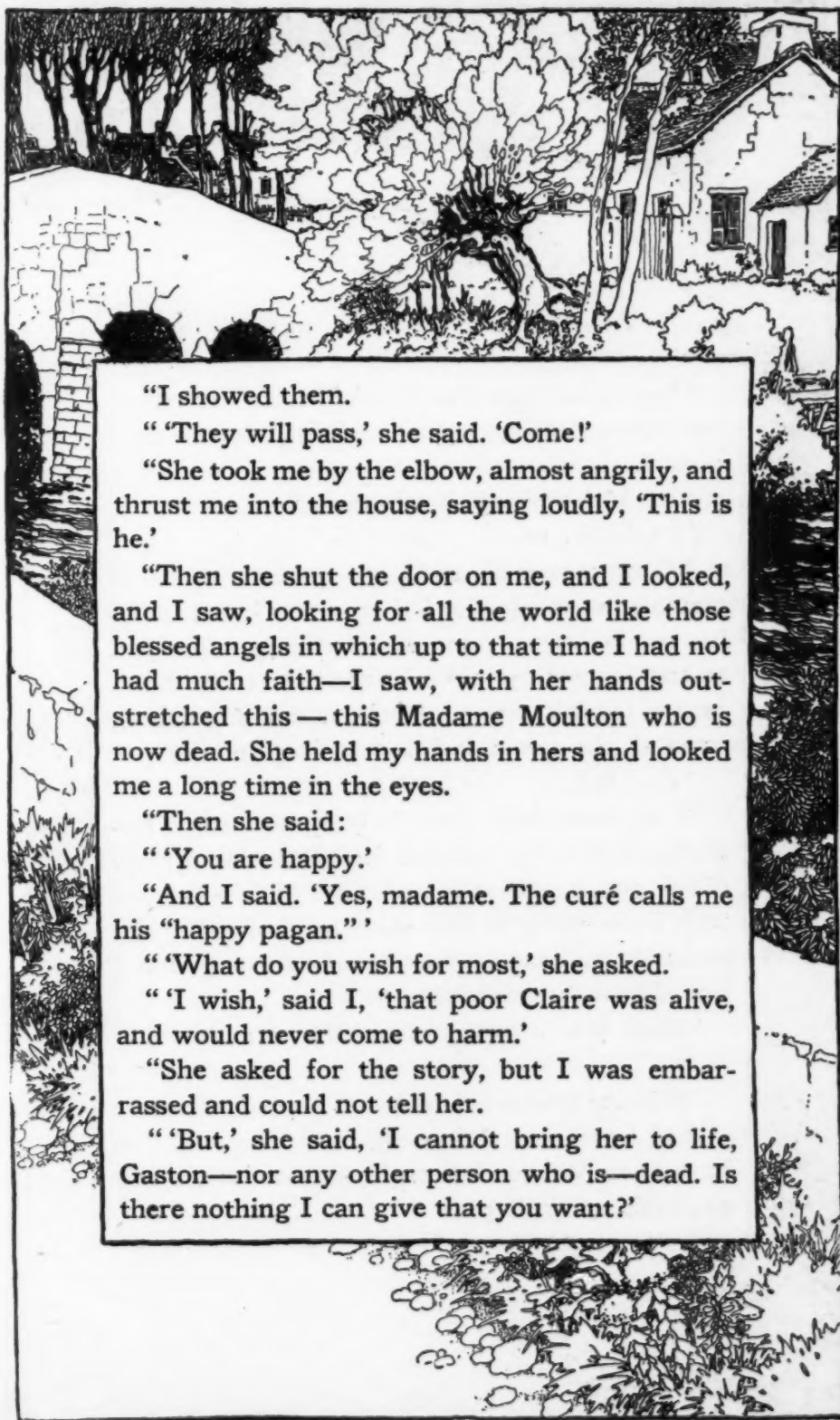
little we had often played together at high-spy, about the barns, and later we had been sweet-hearts for a while. And—it was the first I ever knew of ugliness, monsieur—they had found the body in the Loire. And the curé (I had met him, and he was crying about it) had spoken with terrible violence for him, for he was a peace-loving, fun-making man of God, and had told me why she had thrown herself in the water to drown. And he did not mince the matter; he spoke as one maddened by the unworthiness and beastliness of man, and he spoke with great speed and strength, using our strong peasant words and figures. So he told me about evil, and I came home not absolutely happy.

“My mother was in the garden among the cabbages, her skirt pinned up and her big man’s hoe in her hands. But she was not at work. She was leaning on the hoe, and watching for me.

“‘But hurry, Gaston,’ she called to me.

“‘Why,’ said I. ‘I have heard a sad story and it has made me heavy in the feet.’

“‘But,’ she said, ‘there is a lady to see you. Are your hands clean?’



"I showed them.

" 'They will pass,' she said. 'Come!'

"She took me by the elbow, almost angrily, and thrust me into the house, saying loudly, 'This is he.'

"Then she shut the door on me, and I looked, and I saw, looking for all the world like those blessed angels in which up to that time I had not had much faith—I saw, with her hands outstretched this — this Madame Moulton who is now dead. She held my hands in hers and looked me a long time in the eyes.

"Then she said:

" 'You are happy.'

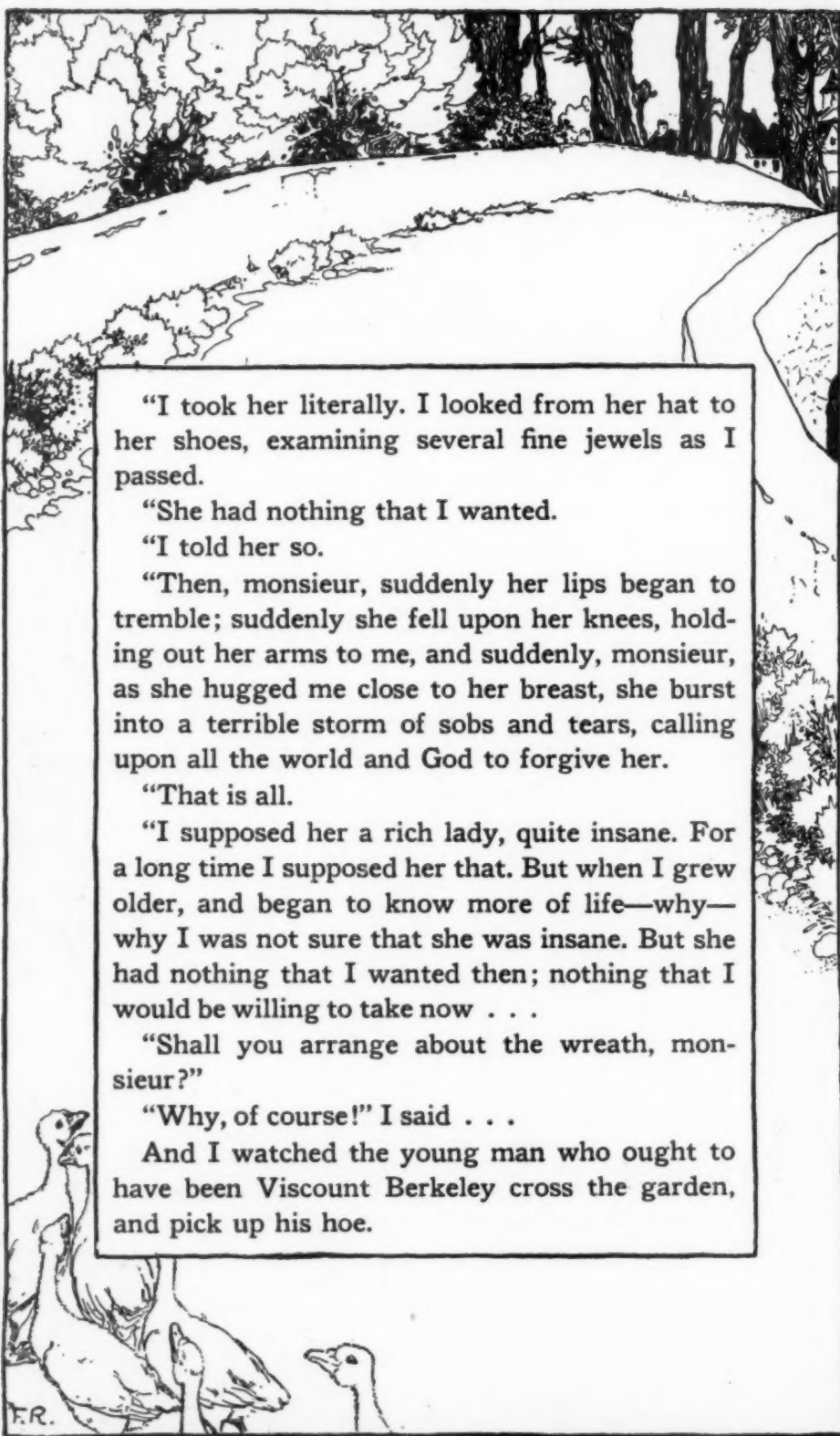
"And I said. 'Yes, madame. The curé calls me his "happy pagan."'

" 'What do you wish for most,' she asked.

" 'I wish,' said I, 'that poor Claire was alive, and would never come to harm.'

"She asked for the story, but I was embarrassed and could not tell her.

" 'But,' she said, 'I cannot bring her to life, Gaston—nor any other person who is—dead. Is there nothing I can give that you want?'



"I took her literally. I looked from her hat to her shoes, examining several fine jewels as I passed.

"She had nothing that I wanted.

"I told her so.

"Then, monsieur, suddenly her lips began to tremble; suddenly she fell upon her knees, holding out her arms to me, and suddenly, monsieur, as she hugged me close to her breast, she burst into a terrible storm of sobs and tears, calling upon all the world and God to forgive her.

"That is all.

"I supposed her a rich lady, quite insane. For a long time I supposed her that. But when I grew older, and began to know more of life—why—why I was not sure that she was insane. But she had nothing that I wanted then; nothing that I would be willing to take now . . .

"Shall you arrange about the wreath, monsieur?"

"Why, of course!" I said . . .

And I watched the young man who ought to have been Viscount Berkeley cross the garden, and pick up his hoe.



The special car had lain on a siding for a week

In Spite of the Accidents

BY WILLIAM MAC LEOD RAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS

MISS MELHUIISH rose, stifled a yawn in her sensitive nostrils, and began to strip her gloves.

"And that's all for to-day, thank goodness. I hate business," she announced definitively.

The Westerner smiled. "That's not quite all. There's another matter."

She waited—her brilliant look flashing on him—a dainty, slender, young patrician with all youth's graces and none of its illusions.

"It's something personal, to myself," he explained.

"Oh!"

She looked sharply at him, a suggestion of hauteur in her manner.

"I expect to leave for Montana to-night. I'll probably not be in the East again till Fall."

"Indeed."

The cool indifference of her voice might have daunted a less determined man, but this one did not have his close-gripped square jaw and steel-gray eyes for nothing. A born fighter, he had survived and come to the top because of the stark bulldog courage in him.

"I'm a self-made man, Miss Melhuish. I began as a street waif and I've been pretty nearly everything since from a steam-boat roustabout and the cook in a cow-camp to what I am now."

"It's very creditable, I'm sure, Mr. Brand," she murmured with a chill abstraction.

"I'm not boasting. I'm telling you this about myself because it may seem to you to have a bearing on what I am to say. Will you marry me, Miss Melhuish?"

"No, thank you, Mr. Brand," she answered in the same careless tone with which she would have declined an ice.

"Why not?"

"Because—" She broke off and glanced at him with fine contempt. "I prefer not to."

Brand held an even temper. "I understand that. What I am trying to get at is: What do you object to in me?"

It was on her tongue tip to say "Everything," but she found a more crushing answer. "I don't object to anything. Why should I, since I don't know you?"

She glanced casually at the clock, but

the Westerner was impervious to hints. He did not mean to leave till he was ready.

"That can be remedied," he suggested.

"I hardly think it necessary."

"You haven't yet told me your reasons."

She tapped the polished floor impatiently with her suede shoe.

"I have said I don't care to. Isn't that reason enough?"

"Not quite, under the circumstances. I understand, of course, that I don't belong to your set. I'm not even a college man. All the education I have was picked up in the outdoor school of life that holds sessions twelve months in the year. Is that what you object to?"

She considered, frowningly, this big masterful man who had to have reasons, and the more she thought of it the greater grew her resentment. It came flaming into her cheeks in a wave of color.

"You're the fifth man that has proposed to me this summer, Mr. Brand. One of them had seen me only three times."

"That doesn't surprise me," he smiled.

"This is the sixth time I have seen you."

"All of them knew the extent of my fortune."

"Ought that to have deterred them if they loved you?"

She laughed scornfully. "Love—fiddlesticks."

"You mean, of course, that I'm asking you for your money."

"Baldly but accurately, that's just what I mean."

He swept her with a critical eye that took in the figure of slim suppleness, the dainty provoking face of spirit and intelligence.

Then, "I'm disappointed in you," he told her.

This brought a surprised "Why?" from her.

"Yet I needn't be. It's the way you've been brought up. The whole emphasis of your environment has been upon money. It's the standard of worth in your set. Its possession covers a multitude of faults."

"In me?" she asked, silkily.

"Yes, in you. You've been spoiled ever since you were a baby. Whatever you

cried for you got, and of course you came to think you were the most important creature on the planet. That is natural."

"It is very kind of you, a stranger, to go to so much trouble to tell me this," she said with soft irony, but nevertheless she was aware of a faint thrill of excitement stealing through her.

"When you needed spanking you didn't get it. When you needed plain talk you got soft soap. I'm going to tell you the truth for a change."

Standing before her solidly on both feet, tall, loose-limbed and easy, he looked so vigorous and sure of himself that her sense of superiority knew a little shock of doubt.

"Please do," she said with mock humility.

"You have the narrowness to imply that you have more to offer than I have. I deny it. What have you to offer an honest lover? Your fortune and your beauty principally, and both of them are accidents. What claim have you on the world? What service have you ever given it? You can't even wait on yourself. You're like a baby that has to be fed from a bottle. You don't pay your honest stint of service. You're a drone in the great hive of workers, a wretched little butterfly, a fluffy kitten, good for nothing but to cuddle."

"Thank you."

He paid no attention to her interruption. "For me, at least I'm a worker. I've helped develop a new country, built railroads and dug mines, while you have squandered the profits of my toil. If I'm on the way to success it is because I've taken the world by the throat with a strangle-hold. Out in my country a man has to stand on his feet. He gets there if he's strong; he goes to the wall if he's weak. He isn't judged by the money he's got, unless that is a test of the stuff in him. Now I've offered you a chance to live, really to share in the big things that are doing in the world. I've been magnanimous enough to forget you're living on an immense fortune you never earned, and you try to freeze me with your society stare. Forget it, Miss Melhuish. I grant you people aren't all equal. God didn't make them that way. But don't think for



"The whole emphasis of your environment has been upon money"

a moment that the butterflies are the superior ones. I take my hat off to the folks that do the world's work. There's a plain name for your class, ma'am, and it is 'loafer.'"

"I never was talked to so in my life," she gasped.

"Probably not," he answered coolly. "I can't blame you for that, since it's your misfortune."

She looked out of the window with what was meant to be a manner of detached abstraction.

"He wouldn't understand if I were to explain. He wouldn't know that gentlemen don't talk that way to ladies," she said to herself softly but audibly.

"He would understand but he wouldn't care," the man replied, cheerfully. "He doesn't think it important whether people think him a gentleman or not, if measured by their little yard-sticks. But he's a man, just as you're a girl, Wilma Melhuish. You've got to meet Phil Brand on that basis. All the artificial bars you and your futile set have built up so carefully come tumbling down before that fact. You're just a girl, a slim, flamey girl, ready to love and be loved when the right man comes. I don't care whether I'm the right man or not, but I'm not going to lose you because I'm afraid to tell you the truth."

There was a glowing spirit in her eyes, some spark of unwonted passion that more sharply accentuated her beauty. To this suitor, at least, she could not bring a pulse quite unfluttered.

Never in his life had he talked nonsense charmingly to a pretty girl. He came to the sex duel with a blacksmith's hammer, but it was impossible to deny to his lean bronzed strength masculine dominance. He had trampled underfoot the barrier of social distinction behind which she had taken refuge. She could, of course, coldly insist upon its existence, or she could take him at his own valuation and tacitly yield the point. Characteristically she did the latter, for vigor of spirit inhabited this slim Parisian-gowned body, an independence which sometimes toppled the conventions to which all her life she had been relentlessly trained.

"So I have nothing to offer but my fortune and what you are pleased to call my beauty?" she said with dangerous sweetness.

His alert eyes ran quietly over the long lines of her slender fullness. "You are beautifully finished, of course; no expense spared to hide the real *you* behind the ivory enamel. I'm only your mining superintendent come out of the West on business (which you say you detest), but I shouldn't have done you the honor to ask you to be my wife if I hadn't seen, for just an instant the real girl behind all this mummery of caste. It was the first day I ever saw you. Perhaps you remember that your old nurse came to call on you while I was here. When she was announced, you jumped up, ran to her, took her in your arms and laughed and cried over her, so it did me good to see you and her. The mask was off then for about 'steen seconds. That's the girl I have asked to marry me, not the one that raises her eyebrows and says 'Indeed!' so icily that the temperature falls."

"Do you always throw in an essay on morals and manners when you propose?" she asked.

He took her little fling with smiling appreciation.

"I haven't ever found time to ask a girl to marry me before. I'm a busy man. I daresay I've made a botch of it."

She laughed with slow malice.

"Dear me, no! You're an incomparable lover, Mr. Brand. There's only one fault to find with your system. Perhaps that is not a fault but it is unusual. It is customary, you know, to make a pretense at wooing a young lady before you do her the honor—that's your phrase, I think—of asking her to share your name and fame."

He laughed shortly. "Yes, I know that. I'm reversing the law. I'd wait a long time before I got an opportunity to pay you any attentions unless you come out to Montana and look over your properties as you ought to do. If I were going to begin at all I had to begin at the wrong end."

"Then you couldn't have been very much surprised at my answer."

"Not the least. I expected it."

"Perhaps that is why you asked me."

"Yes. I wanted you to know I was on earth. You'll remember me now."

"I certainly shall."

"And when you come out to Montana—"

"But I'm not coming."

"Oh yes, you are. You can't run away from your responsibilities. You'll be out there inside of six months."

"I won't. I'm not in the least interested in Montana."

"Your interest will grow."

She thought it likely, though her "Indeed!" denied, politely, his assertion. For she was discovering that this man was out of the ordinary. What he was really like she could only remotely guess, since her experience had included none of his kind. He might have wrought robbery and murder for all she knew, but there was some dynamic force in him that aroused her curiosity and interest. He was impossible, of course; nevertheless her eyes had caught from his something that went through her as subtly and penetratingly as certain bars of music.

"I'll give myself six months before I see your private car out there," he said.

Her dark eyes swept him with elaborate indifference. "I wonder now."

"We'll see."

It was at this juncture that E. Percy Sloane was announced. Brand let his inscrutable gaze fall on the young man, appraised him a tailor's model and a sap-head—somewhat unjustly it must be admitted—and let his gaze drift into space. Mr. Sloane had been weighed and found wanting, tried by the standards of the man from the West.

"I'll say good-by, Miss Melhuish," the mine superintendent said, offering his hand.

She took it, and found her gaze unexpectedly lost in the depth of his fathomless steel-gray eyes.

"Good-by, Mr. Brand. Pleasant journey," she said, but was irritably aware that a soft color was suffusing her.

"See you in Montana soon."

She shook her head. "I don't think so."

He smiled derisive doubt and was gone.

Miss Melhuish, breakfasting in her

private car with the party she had brought along to see the West, chanced to look from a window upon a square-built muscular figure swinging across the tracks.

She laughed reminiscently and announced aloud:

"Enter, a man!"

Mr. E. Percy Sloane looked puzzled. He was a complacent, good-natured, but undistinguished gentleman upon whom rumor had fastened as the future husband of Wilma Melhuish. Just now he was at a loss to account for the faint trace of excitement in her eyes. Nor did he find any reason for it when she further explained.

"It's Mr. Brand, my superintendent."

That gentleman presently strode in like a breeze from the hills, so conspicuous was his lean bronzed strength, the freshness of his vigor, among this half-dozen of imported exotics from the East. On his native heath he seemed to Miss Melhuish younger than when she had met him in her home. Youth still rang in his laughter, sat lightly on his broad shoulders.

"I knew you would come," he told the girl at the first chance to speak to her alone.

"But not inside of the six months," she retorted quickly.

Her friends voted it a strange whimsey that had brought her to Montana. She had not explained to them that this was an adventure, that she had looked forward to it as a temporary rescue from the humdrum of the life which hedged her in so closely. But Brand, watching her out of impassive eyes that told nothing, divined something of the pulse of eagerness that beat in this self-contained, trimly gowned young creature fresh from the hothouse of conventions. For all her slenderness, she walked with the supple ease that showed she liked it. Her springy step, the sparkle in her eye, belied the reserve her pride insisted upon.

"Anyhow you came."

"Yes, I came. My conscience troubled me. You said it was a responsibility of mine, that I ought to study conditions here in person. Very well. I'm here. Show me everything there is to see."



More than one horny hand had made her fingers wince

He did. One visit to the dark underground tunnels which dripped with water and were so hot that perspiration rolled from their faces, was enough for most of the party. Sloane stuck it out three times from a sense of duty.

"He doesn't think I ought to go alone with you," Wilma whispered to Brand, gleefully. "He carries discretion to a point of indiscretion."

But even Sloane gave up before Wilma had had enough. Dressed in the shapeless garments and stout shoes her superintendent had secured for her, this soft-skinned, dainty young woman found something to delight her in every shaft-house, cage, cross-cut, or tunnel. It was all new, outside of her experience, and it opened to her a glimpse of a world that had hitherto been as foreign to her as

Mars, a workaday world in which Philip Brand was king by virtue of the competence and strength in him. She met rough shift-bosses and found they were human beings like herself. More than one horny hand had made her little gloved fingers wince beneath its hearty pressure. All her life the veneer of social distinctions had been emphasized. For the first time she came in touch with social inferiors who were not flunkies.

The special car had lain on a siding for a week. During this time the party had spent two days fishing in the hills, but the chaperon, aided and abetted by the others, was beginning to murmur against a longer stay.

Wilma gave way and made arrangements to leave early next day.

"Mr. Brand has promised to take me

down the Never Sweat. I do so want to see the mine running at full speed in the night. How many of you want to go with us?" she asked of the assembled party on the last evening of their stay.

Nobody seemed anxious to volunteer.

"I don't see the fun of groping around in dripping tunnels myself," said one young woman promptly. "I'm going to stay here and play bridge."

This brought a general chorus of agreement. Wearily Mr. Sloane announced his intention of going with the Never Sweat party. The thing was perfectly absurd, of course, quite impossible in fact, but this mining superintendent, Brand's, influence over Miss Melhuish was beginning to trouble him. He thought it just as well not to give them another opportunity to be alone together. The girl was at a romantic age and was likely to get odd notions into her head. It would cost him some rheumatic twinges perhaps, but a chap had to make some concessions when he intended to marry an independent sort of girl like Wilma.

Wherefore Sloane trailed behind them, sloshing through water, stumbling against sharp rock projections, and enduring other discomforts heroically. Some fifty yards in advance their electric searchlight flashed notice of their

presence. Their voices drifted back to him, hers quick and eager, the man's quiet and slow.

"Thank God, we'll be on the way back to civilization to-morrow and Mr. Brand will be wiped off the map," the clubman comforted himself.

Just now, however, Philip Brand was very much on the map for Wilma Melhuish. It was her last night and she was making the most of it. Hers was a virginal soul, but passionately desirous of life despite her training. She was now both shy and merry. Excitement burned in her eyes, so that in the vague light be-



He went forward to examine the cave-in.



Brand dragged her back against the breast of the tunnel

tween the electric bulbs they seemed to him to shine like stars. He thought it wonderful that this creature of fire and dew should be so close to him in the intimate solitudes of the deep earth.

Once she looked back at their chaperon, hopelessly in the rear.

"Poor Mr. Sloane! Shall we wait for him? I'm afraid he finds doing his duty pretty arduous to-night."

"No. Let him catch up if he can." For an instant Brand's gaze chiseled into her. "I wonder if he can—to-morrow, or next month, or next year."

She smiled at him with the innocence her art held at command.

"A stern chase is a long chase, they say."

Even as she spoke there came a terrific roar, together with a collapse of the tunnel roof in front of them.

Brand dragged her back against the breast of the tunnel.

"It's a cave-in," he told her quietly when the booming echoes had died away.

His arm was still about her, the slender pulsing body against his. She looked up at him out of a face from which the blood had been driven. Her nerves were strung taut as the strings of a violin, but strangely enough she was not afraid.

"Are we in danger?" she asked.

He would not tell her less than the truth.

"I don't know yet. I shall have to look. Probably we are cut off from the outside. But don't be afraid."

"I'm not. Just at first I was, but not now," the girl answered steadily.

"You are brave."

"No. You are here," she said simply. He laughed with deep delight.

"And that matters?"

Without any verbal answer her eyes met his.

"Tell me," he ordered.

"More than anything in the world."

"Thank God."

"Then you're glad to be here, too."

"I wouldn't be anywhere else for all your millions," he cried.

She trembled toward his kiss half reluctantly.

Presently he released her and went forward to examine the cave-in.

"I see light through the dirt. The timbers are jammed so that we can crawl through. Come!" he called cheerfully.

Nevertheless he went first and came back again to her in order to make sure it could be done in safety. When they were quite beyond the danger she spoke again.

"You have asked me to marry you—a thousand years ago it seems—and you have kissed me, but you have not told me that you love me," she said with soft laughter of joy that was half bold and half shy.

"No, I haven't told you in words. But how can I help it?"

"Even though I have nothing to offer an honest lover," she quoted.

"Nothing to offer," he scoffed.

"Except the accidents of my money and what you called my beauty," Wilma reminded him.

He smiled down at her.

"But it is true. Except in accidentals I bring you only poverty. I'm all you said I was—a butterfly and a parasite."

"Then I love your poverty, my Cophetua's beggar maid."

"But you'll teach me to be useful," she insisted.

"We'll teach each other everything worth knowing," he prophesied, gayly.

"I say, is everything all right in there, Wilma?" Mr. Sloane's anxious voice inquired into the darkness from a safe distance.

"As right as can be," the girl answered from the hopefulness of her newborn happiness.

"I congratulate you. I was afraid there had been an accident. You're quite sure everything's all right?"

Her eyes, bubbling with laughter, met those of her lover.

"Quite sure, Mr. Sloane. We're safe at last, though there were two accidents. But it's very good of you to congratulate us."

"Not at all. I've been very anxious. Two accidents, you say. I heard only one."

Again those in the darkness looked at each other with smiles.

"No, there were two, Mr. Sloane," she answered, her eyes still on her lover.



"Think of the loans you could float!"

A Transparent Fiasco

BY A. HAROLD BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

I HURRIED after the man in the Panama hat, and grasped him by the arm.

"Hello, Quackenbush!" I exclaimed. "I didn't expect to see you so far north. Come in and have one!"

Ulysses Quackenbush Billings, my friend in the caloric zone headgear, turned and regarded me fixedly. The mention of refreshment caused his moody countenance to crack into a broad smile. At least it would have been broad, had the expanse been greater, but my friend's physiognomy was of the lean-jowl variety. His face had the look of a man who has probed human kind to their depths,

and found them wanting. I had recognized him by an infallible hall-mark, a slight limp, in explanation of which he was wont to refer vaguely to San Juan Hill and the war with Spain, but which, I believe, was caused by a kick from a three-year-old in the paddock at Saratoga.

He regarded my invitation favorably, so arm-in-arm we passed into a Broadway café. Mr. Billings, with a sigh of relief, sat down at a table, and stared absently into space. He had a curious habit of sitting sideways on a seat, one hand thrust deep in his trousers-pocket,

the other arm dangling over the back of his chair. I signaled to a waiter, and as soon as the glasses were set before us, Quackenbush brightened.

I had known Billings as an itinerant inventor (promoter he called himself), and as a frequenter of bucket-shops and the race-tracks. But at present, to judge by his costume, he was not quite flush. His light gray suit was no longer fresh, and his canvas shoes were prematurely aged, but his Panama hat and gorgeous red tie were glossily new, and spoke for themselves.

"Didn't expect to cast your glims on me, eh?" he remarked, draining his glass. "Well, it's healthier here than—where I was."

"Africa?" I queried.

"No, not Africa," he replied. Then suddenly he asked:

"Say, did you ever hear of Salvaduras?"

"The name has a familiar ring," I replied; "what is it?"

"It? Oh, it's a particolored land where law and order are as extinct as the dodo," he ejaculated, flourishing his arm. "Where justice is about as visible as the inside of a pool-room without the password. It's a land where brigadier-generals, malarial jim-jams, and iced drinks are at large, and everything is so lovely it can't last; in other words it's a Central American republic."

"Oho," I nodded.

"Butted into a little adventure down there," ran on Quackenbush; "somebody trumped my ace with a two spot. Like to hear about it?"

"Delighted!" I exclaimed, and beckoned to the waiter.

"Well," he began, wiping his lips, "I'd been destroying time for several moons in the republic of Nickacosti, where I got next; and many honors, medals, and other nick-nacks were unloaded my way. When the noble old rascal, President Jimreyes, was turned down by the revolution, I faded away, too. So that's how it came about that a fruit steamer landed me one morning at the town of Vera Rica, which is the chief port of this here fairy garden of Salvaduras.

"You know I'm quite an inventor. D'you mind about them Florida land investments? Well, I invented a patent hive, for 'Bee Culture in the Everglades,' at ten dollars a share, but the bee-business wasn't the honey. You could've doubled your money in two months, only the Postal Department got funny and set the bee on me. I was stung. I packed my suit-case, took my genius and a tramp steamer, and hied me to the tropic zone.

"From the landing, I wandered 'round this fruity burg of Vera Rica a space then dropped into Pheelum O'Root's beach café. I'd met Pheelum in Greytown when he was selling bogus Barcelona lottery tickets. He never was a happy-looker, but this time in Vera Rica his face was more gloomy than usual. I could never figure out whether O'Root was a corporation lawyer or a somnambulist.

"O' course you might think he had a handicap. Old O'Root had been a wild Irishman from Hoboken, N. J., and his mother was once the belle of El Fedora. So you see, Pheelum had all the fine feelings of an Irishman and the ambition of the Central American.

"I walks up to the bar, nonchalant, handing out the memory grin.

"'Cheer up, Pheelum,' says I, 'it may not be as bad as your face would indicate. Gimme a Castillian highball; I'm some thirsty.'

"The way he looked at me you'd think I'd asked for a yard of crape and no flowers. However, he shoved out a glass and grabbed a bottle. Then he did a funny thing. He stood up a foot-rule and slowly poured out about half an inch of poison. If I was a Scotchman I'd have been insulted.

"'Oh, don't mind me,' says I, just to show him I was on. 'Go as far as you like. I prefer it strong.'

"'No good, *Señor* Billings,' says Pheelum, sighing in Spanish. 'How long will this cruel law last? Are we never to be free? Och, me heart is broken!'

"'What means this foolishness?' says I, kind o' roiled. 'If you can only give me half an inch, let me swallow it quick. Now what is this talk about a law?'

"Then he loosened up and told me the whole, sad story.

"Seems a prohibition wave—one of the offshoots from the 'Sunny South'—had hit this republic of Salvaduras, and carried away all by the board, as your sailor friend would say. The agency of the Litha Water Trust, up at the capital, kept the *vox populi* on the *key veeve*—that's Latin y'know.

"Then a 'Liberal' mob—consisting of seventeen men, five women, and three children — surrounded the President's Palace, demanding reform. I bet he was a mighty scared man, that President—Pheelum says he's a tryant anyway—for it seems the army had marched out to collect the taxes, and there was no one to protect the cabinet.

"Well, to square the mob—which was swelled by nine Indians, who ought've been arrested for lack of clothes—the Boss and his aldermen passed this law Pheelum was weeping about. It restricted the size of a drink to fourteen drams *aver-de-poi*! That's what the Siphon Trust wanted, but it was pretty tough on fellows like me and Pheelum. Wouldn't it be awful if New York was to—but say, that's impossible, aint it?

"You couldn't buy a decent drink across the bar, but they'd sell you a case of gin, and you could take it home. And gin was a government monopoly! Say, that President ought to be at Tammany Hall, eh? That law'd cut down the census, some, too; for say, if you ever got through a case of Salvaduran gin, it'd be you to give your friends a pleasant ride through the country. I tried to get a bottle of the real stuff from Pheelum, but he poses as law abidin', besides, a couple of policemen were shooting craps just outside.

"Where can I find this President person? I asks. 'At the capital, eh? I'd like to have a little conversation with him,' I continues, quiet and even.

"Oh, no; not at the capital, *Señor*,' sings Pheelum. 'For was he not driven from there last week by the patriots under Don Gomez, the friend of the people! The President is here—in Vera Rica; he is at the Casa Dura, facing the plaza. May he choke to death.'

"Don't let your feelings run away with you,' says I. 'I'll step 'round and

have a few words with the old boy. I've got something to show him. If I get the law changed,' I further remarks, 'the drinks'll be on you.'

"'Buenos,' twitters Pheelum, but he didn't look it. 'Glory be,' he says, 'that the noble-hearted Don Gomez, listens to the call of the thirsty!'

"So I set out to look up the President of Salvaduras. I had an invention with me that I thought would win the big stake.

"The Casa Dura was a big, white, Spanish house, square, except for the doorway, and hollow in the middle. The little nigger sentry did stunts with his pot-metal rifle, and called a Colonel; the Colonel passed me in to the President.

"He was a nice old guy, with sort o' dark colored whiskers, and a tuft on his chin like a goat's. His complexion was ochre-brunette, kind of a dried lemon shade. But he was a real old sport; yes, and he had the treasury with him. When I flashed my latest spark of genius, he was most tickled to death.

"Far be it from me to boast, but it certainly was a remarkable invention. It was a regular glass tumbler, with a false bottom, and a patent measure—one of my own—marked on it, so when you poured out a dram you really got about a quarter of a pint. See the idea? It was principally for married men. I'm a philanthropist, eh? Well, as I said before, the Salvaduran big-stick was delighted.

"Look here, Pres.,' says I, *sotto voce*, 'this is one of the greatest things south of Battery Park, if you know where that is. If I was to manufacture them here in Vera Rica, all the scientific big-bugs on the mundane globe would glue their eyes on this beauty spot. Think of the loans you could float! Why, if you was to go into a deal,' I cajoles, 'with Ulysses Q. Billings of the U. S. A., you'd be backed up to the limit by that dinky little gun-boat out there in your torrid fish-pond. It's the invention we've all been looking for. Take it from me, old scout,' I says, 'it will revolutionize the world.'

"Eh, what?' gurgles the President. 'But I don't want a revolutionize!'

"'Sure not,' says I, 'I mean rejuvenate. This invention will sparkle a glimmer of hope in the hearts of every prohibition State south of Indiana. Think of the glory it will bring,' I whispers, 'when you're tired thinking of the profits.'

"Did he notice the genius of my in-

registered a kick at the new liquor law, and he wanted to stand in with them. The army down in these soapless republics are the main show; they and a couple of American capitalists run the precinct. So the President ordered 5,000 on the spot. Why? Ye-see, he thought with my



Ulysses Quackenbush Billings

vention? He did not. But I could see him figuring out what it was worth to him. Eh?

"But to resume.

"When this President person understood I could put up a factory and manufacture 'em in Vera Rica, he turned on the gas regardless. Seems the army had

tumblers his soldier-boys could go on imbibing poison, and the law would still run. He was going to present them to the army, hoping to stave off the next revolution.

"That stroke of business gave me some inward joy. Five thousand tumblers at five dollars a glass, that cost me 7 cents

each to produce, looked like Broadway and the white lights again for mine. I was going to make him settle in gold, as I was wise to the paper money. I walked back to the hotel on air.

"In the night I heard a great rumpus going on; guns firing, people shouting, and a band struck up what sounded like 'Hiawatha,' or the Marseillaise with variations. I should have cottoned to what it meant, but as only about fifty-seven mosquitoes had got through the net, and the bed was no worse than usual, I dozed off again.

"Next morning, as I strolled over to the Casa Dura, everything seemed the same. Perhaps there were a few more brunette colored fire-eaters on the streets, but the Caribbean breeds soldiers like malaria and national debts.

"When I asked to see His Nibs, they passed me in O. K. The usher of the black rod—he really was a Major-General—flung open the door and hollered, 'El Presidente Gomez.' I was ready to cash in right there. For the other President's name, the one that had ordered my tumblers, was Alcashes. There had been a revolution in the night! I was stung again. I could only do the silent gawk, but I noticed the present holder of the chair was a little, fat, smoky-tinted man, with black spike-moustaches. He champ'd his bit like he was addressing Congress, or a peace conference.

"How have you dared to face me, infamous scoundrel?' he shouts. 'Do you not know that your friend the traitorous tryant who ruled here yesterday, retreated to the mountains five hours ago? You are a filibuster, and an enemy to our glorious republic!'

"He made some more noise, and I ducks, hoping to make the door, but this fiend lets out another squeal, and yells: 'What ho, guards! Seize this fellow and put him in the meat-safe!'

"Course he didn't explode those exact words, but what he did say filled the bill. I started to protest, but what could one lone man do? Ten little coffee-colored soldiers, armed with Springfield rifles of the vintage of '66, got busy and man-handled me like an expressman juggling

trunks. They led me forth like an Italian push-cart taken in the act on Sunday, to the military prison. On the way to the calaboose I saw the U. S. consul, and tipped him a wink."

Quackenbush paused, and blew a reflective smoke-wreath; I had ordered cigars.

Then he resumed:

"On the third evening the boss of the prison—one of the Gomez push—blew in to hand me the glad tidings. He had on a dirty scarlet jacket, and looked like Coney Island in October.

"*'Señor,'* says this human grape-fruit, 'the illustrious President Don Gomez has decided to liberate you. Therefore you are free. Go; and in future beware. We will not tolerate filibusters!'

"Aw, quit your kidding, little one,' says I, 'and don't overlook a poor working man's pay-envelope;' for the guards had stripped me of every *centavo*.

"But they hadn't touched the model of my invention. You see, I'd given a Mexican dollar to a soldier to buy a bottle of *aguardiente*, and when it kept disappearing in my patent glass, they thought it was *hodo* sure. So none of them 'ud monkey with it. But, nevertheless, this *Commandero* person ran me to the door and gave me the rough chuck-out.

"Say, but the sunshine was hot and bright after the stone walls and mud floors of the jail. I knew the sun would sink in a couple of hours, but while it lasted it was fierce. I supposed the consul had rung in the American citizen talk, and given the scare to Gomez. I might have gone to the consulate and gotten a free passage to Colon; but say, I'd once been given the gate by the Eagle-lad at Port Limon, so I was leery of American shoe leather.

"I beat it along the pavement, pretty well subdued. Every fat *señor* who saw me looked the other way; they knew where I'd come from. I began to feel peckish, after the mangoes of the jail, so passing an open *café*, went in and sat down at a table. I ordered something, then suddenly remembered that I'd nothing in my pockets but holes. I tried

to get away with it, but the waiter called a couple of kitchen bandits.

"My friend, I can't describe how sore, hungry, and dejected I felt. Of course the turn-up that worried me was how to feed. My second idea was to do the quick get-away. But what happened just shows how a fellow's cards are sometimes stacked against him. I mind hearing a guy down at Carnegie Hall giving a talk about 'Man's destiny.' Y'know I hate to talk about myself, but I guess it was my destiny that was working.

"I stumbled through the town till I found myself on the outskirts, close to the jungle. A small, white plastered house stood in a bit of cleared land, and as I passed a man came out of the door. He was a tall, blue-eyed, blond-headed chap, with a pineapple-frappé skin, and dressed in white ducks. He took me in at a glance.

"'Hallo,' he says pleasantly, 'you look done out. Come in and have something to eat. I can't see a white man go hungry.'

"He smiled so affable, and me being so miserable, I let him lead me in like a lamb. Inside was a tubby, little Irishman, that he introduced as Mr. Michael Reilly. A meal was laid out, and I got on the job, regaining my usual *sang froid*. Not much was said then, but when we had put away the grub, Jephson, the Englishman—the blond-headed chap was English—began to talk. It seems he and Reilly had a scheme all doped out and they wanted to let me in on it, too. Their plan looked good, so when he had finished I asks, sort o' casual:

"'It amounts to this, eh? You're going to start a revolution to kick out the Gomez government, and you want me to throw in my lot with you?'

"'Precisely,' says Jephson; 'you have hit the mark.'

"'I don't suppose you're doing this for your health,' I puts in. 'What do you figure out of it?'

"'You're right,' he replies, coolly. 'We aren't doing it for pleasure. Reilly here will be in command of the army, and in a state of war the rich planters will shell out their bags of *pesos* for protection.

Then think of the treasure Gomez has accumulated; we know how to make him disgorge!'

"'That all *sounds* good,' says I; 'but don't you know you're taking chances of being perforated by a cute little rifle-ball?'

"'No fear of that,' says the Englishman. 'The army wont stand by Gomez, because he keeps the cash too tight. We'll bring back Alcashes, then grab our money and skip. Now, what do you say?'

"For answer I flashes my invention, and placed it in the spot light.

"'Gents,' says I, 'behold in me the Thomas A. Edison of the Caribbean!'

"With that I picked up the bottle and started pouring from it into the glass. Say, when my Anglo-Celtic friends seen the liquor disappearing before their startled optics, they was some surprised. Jephson twigged to the idea first.

"'Fine,' says he, but I could see he was trying to play the sarcastic dog. 'Expect to make your fortune by that?'

"'I did expect to,' I answered, sort o' sorrowful. 'But I reckon I've missed my guess.'

"'How's that?' says he.

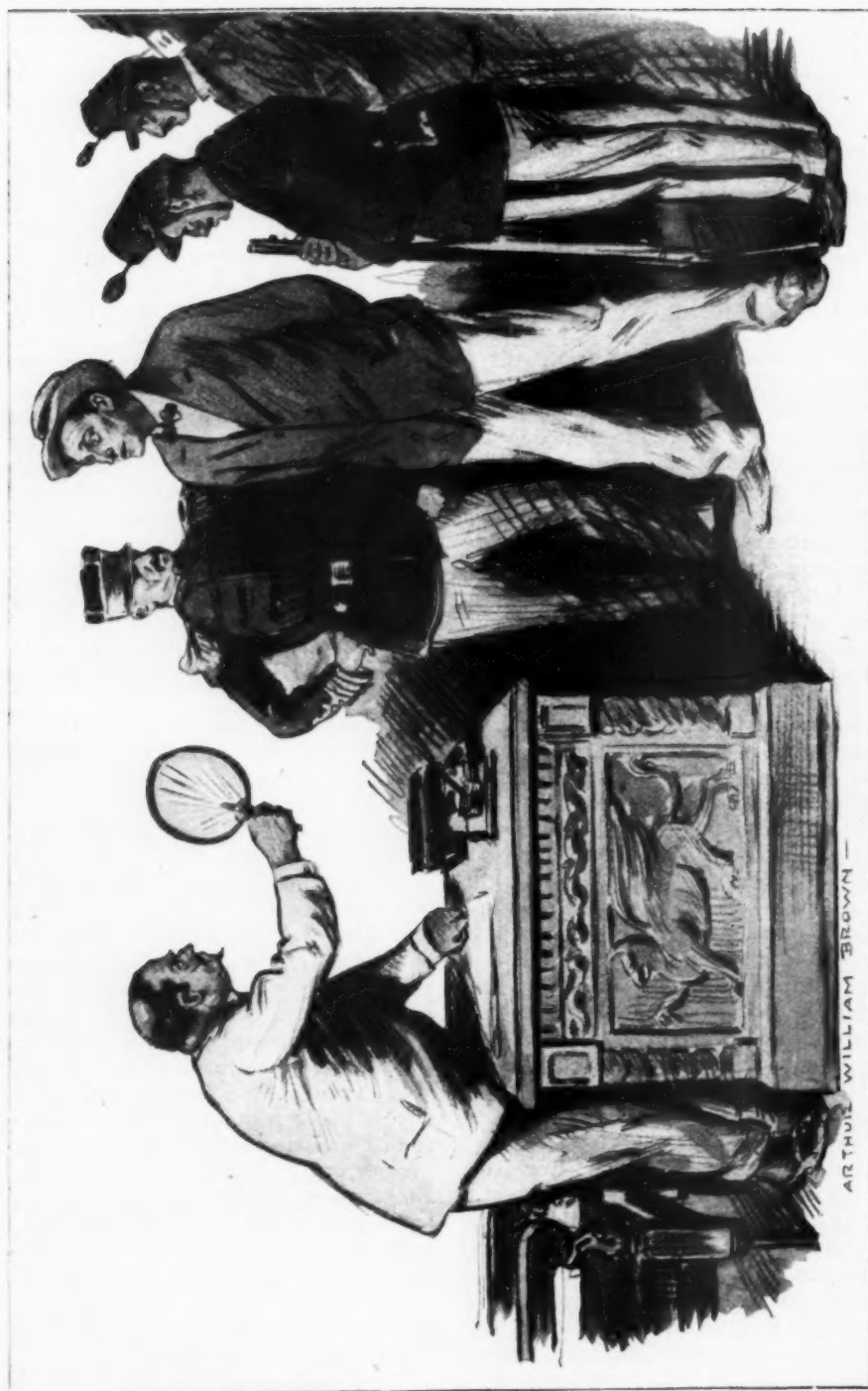
"'Alcashes had ordered five thousand,' I replies, 'at five dollars apiece, but old tightwad Gomez has canceled.'

"'Then,' says Jephson, 'you are one of us. You want reform. This country is full of grafters, and *we'll* have reform before they know anything about it at Washington. Here's a proposition. When the fighting's over, we'll put up a factory and you can turn out tumblers to your heart's content. Can we count on you?'

"Well, them words 'when the fighting's over' took all the fizz out of the highball. Why, I might be killed in the war, or Gomez might win out, and then where'd I be? I remembered what the *cartel Comandante* had said about filibusters, and I didn't fancy a stone wall and a rifle volley to give me the long jump. I'd had a taste of their calaboose, so I thought a moment. No fighting for mine; not if I could help it! I was for universal peace. But I wasn't going to let Jephson or the moonshiner see I was scared.

"So I declaims as follows:

"'Gentlemen,' says I, 'I'm a man of



"How have you dared to face me, infamous scoundrel!" he shouts

peace. That sweet little song-bird twitters and calls, so I can't join you. This business looks too risky for me; besides, I've a weak heart. Inventing inventions and juggling concessions are all right in my line, but I think you're apt to stub your toes. So you can scratch my entry; no fancy harness for mine. So long, gents.'

"Jephson watched me with a nasty twist to his mouth, but the Irishman jumped up, and drew a revolver.

"'You yellow coward,' he snorts. 'Think you'll tell Gomez, I suppose? Well, I guess not!'

"'No! No!' says I. 'Don't point that pea-shooter at me. I'll not carry no message to Gomez, I give you my word of honor.'

"'Let him go, Mick,' says the Englishman, sneering. 'He wont blab; I know the breed.'

"At that the Irishman drew in his artillery.

"So I found myself standing outside in the bright moonlight. Seemed as if getting my feet tangled was my chief stunt. The saucy little stars overhead winked at me as if to say, 'You're a fine fellow, but you're in wrong again.' I kicked myself for several kinds of a fool. Here I had thrown away a chance to make a big pile. Why? Well it might have been that I hadn't the nerve, or those three days in the jug had queered me. Anyway, I couldn't turn back now.

"I walked through the quiet, dark city to the harbor. I thought I might ship on some outgoing steamer, although it was pretty late, and get clear of that whole republic. As I crossed the *plaza*, keeping in the shadow of the houses as much as possible, I noticed the statue of the old Liberator looked gigantic in the moonlight. I wondered what he had done to get the brass figure-piece. It's funny, aint it, what a fuss these little toy republics make over their first topnotcher! But I suppose it's natural; these ancient sword-swingers are the George Washingtons of the banana belt. I noticed a bunch of men across the *plaza*, with the moonlight glinting on something they

carried—bayonets likely. They marched like convicts, so I guessed they were Dago soldiers. But I didn't bother much about them.

"The lights of a whole fleet of ships twinkled in the harbor. At the end of the long pier a gasoline lamp flared in the strong breeze. I walked out and found the second-mate of an American steamer that was to sail at daybreak giving a line of talk to a customs officer over a bill of lading or some such. When they had calmed down, I asked the mate if they needed an extra hand aboard his ship.

"'No, we don't,' says he, looking me up and down. 'But wait a moment. I recollect now, the second-engineer told me we want another stoker to take the place of the one he killed. Can you stoke?'

"'Sure,' says I, 'I've never done anything else. Me for the stoke-hold.'

"'Y'see I was eager to work. Just shows what a man'll do when his nerves get to jumping.

"'Then hop into that boat,' says the mate, 'an' look smart.'

"We got into the boat and shoved off. Just then a gold-braided officer and a file of black-and-tan soldiers come running down the pier.

"'Señor mate!' yelled the leader, waving his sword, 'stop! Are you taking any passengers aboard your ship?'

"'No!' bellowed the mate, 'I aint. What d'y'think this is—a cruising yacht? All these is signed hands. You go chase yourself. Give way there,' he says to the boat's crew, 'an' get away from this blank-blanked country.'

"On board the steamer—she was an old iron hulk called the *Heart Throb*—everything was simply fierce. I guess the second-engineer *had* killed a stoker all right; he nearly finished me. At dawn the *Heart Throb* began to slide through the slippery sea and I managed to get to a port for a breath of air. I heard our captain shout to a spick-and-span Hamburg-American liner.

"'I see you got a boat from the shore,' I heard his call. 'What was that racket in the town last night?'



"Gents," says I, "behold in me the Thomas A. Edison of the Caribbean"

"'Oh, that,' answered a voice. 'Gomez had his troops surround those two filibusters—Jephson and Reilly—in a house on the outskirts, and there was a bit of a fight.'

"'Were they taken?' yelled our old man.

"'I hung on to my breath pretty tight for what was coming.

"'Yes, they were taken all right,' says the officer on the German boat.

"'That's tough on the beggars,' sings out the captain of the *Heart Throb*. 'What have they done with them?'

"'Oh, the usual thing,' shouts the other voice, casual like; 'shot 'em.'

"'Say, it felt pretty comfortable in that stoke-hold; I let the second-greaser boss me all the way to Belize.'

Quackenbush paused reminiscently, and drained his fifth glass.

"'So you left the ship at Belize?'" I insinuated.

"'Nope,'" he replied, with decision.

"That's what I ought've done, but the genius of us inventors keeps us on the run. Look at Edison! When I seen the *Heart Throb's* old man upon the bridge, with his whiskers blowing in the breeze, my heart went pit-a-pat. He looked like a mark to me! Well, y'see, Belize being a British port, there was an English war-ship in the harbor. So me for the Captain, and I cooked up some sympathy talk about the inhuman cruelty of the engineer as 'ud make your eyes sprinkle. I told him I was a British subject, and furthermore rubbed it in. As the cruiser was within hail, the old man calms down, hands out the cordial shake and offers me a drink.

"That's where my invention gets its work in. When the Cap. seen the liquor disappear, he was a surprised son of Neptune, all right, all right. After I had explained, you'd thought I was his long-lost second cousin. You see the poor beggar was a married man. He was so tickled with my invention, that,

after some talk, we decided to go into partnership to exploit it. He had the finances; I had the intellect. Well, I berthed aft and grubbed at the old man's table, all the way to New York.

"I thought I saw the golden plunks rolling my way, but it was not to be."

Ulysses Quackenbush Billings heaved a sigh.

"The skipper's wife was waiting for us on the pier. She was a quaint relic, with a black bag on her arm, and overshoes on her congress gaiters.

"Who is this man?" she barks, pointing at me.

"He's a great inventor," says the Cap., shaky. "A friend of mine, who—"

"Has he paid his passage?" she snaps.

"Well, that was the nut. I started to talk like a Professor, but the old girl cuts in.

"Here, Bill," she calls to the second-mate. "This man's trying to beat his passage. Throw him out, Bill!"

"And Bill did. Five minutes later I

discovered myself in a recumbent posture on the dock, and at my feet was my tumbler-model—smashed to smithereens."

"Pretty rough work," I murmured.

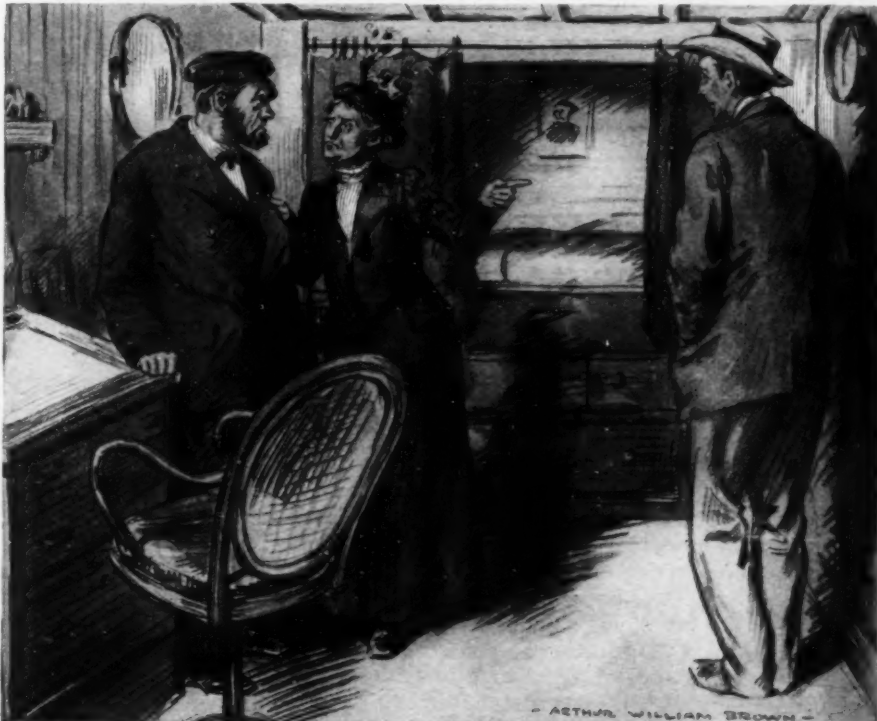
"Yes," said Quackenbush tentatively, "I suppose so. But I've got something great here. It's a powder, called 'Death to the Mosquitoes;' I invented it myself. Y'see, you scatter it 'round, and it attracts the noisy-ones and eats 'em alive. I'm forming a Joint Stock Company; you ought to get in on it?"

"Isn't it likely to smash," I asked gently, "like your tumbler invention?"

"Eh?" said Quackenbush. "Oh, you're referring to that has-been. But this is the real thing. I guarantee in two months to sweep the Jersey meadows of mosquitoes, clean as a billiard ball. Are you on?"

"Nothing doing, Quackenbush," I laughed; "don't count on me. I thought you were a better friend of mine."

Whereat he smiled sadly.



"Who is this man?" she barks

The Survivors

BY FRED JACKSON

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. WEBER-DITZLER

WILLIAM CARRINGTON COLE slipped his feet hastily into his Japanese mules, pattered to the door, and reconnoitered. Outside, the hallway was empty and a row of open doors informed him that the occupants of the near-by rooms had already fled. The air was thick and blue-gray as with fog, but the clouds of smoke and the wavering scarlet flames leaping up the shafts of the elevators, convinced him that it was not fog. He returned to his room frowning with impatience, calmly donned a light tan automobile coat and cap that lay across a chair, and considered. Then he extracted his match-safe from the stand near his bed, caught up a square cedar-wood box under one arm, and sallied forth into the hallway again. He could hear hoarse voices from the street now—very, very faintly—and the muffled chug-chug of the engines, and he remembered that he was on the seventh floor.

The smoke was not yet thick enough to be annoying, but as he made his way carefully down the corridor towards the stairway, he noticed that it was increasing rapidly. The doors that he had passed were all open—silent witnesses to departed tenants—and the floor was littered at every step with unnecessary articles of clothing or abandoned treasures. At one place, he was amused to come upon two large pink vases and a satin sofa-cushion, and farther on a woman's dainty chiffon parasol lay in solitary splendor. He was still smiling at this evidence of some woman's sacrifice, when



She sat upon the top step

he reached the stairway, and saw below him a raging furnace of flame.

For a moment he stood looking downward curiously, wondering how the fire could have made such headway before being discovered; then he remembered the necessity for flight, shrugged his shoulders, and glanced upward. The road lay clear before him, and he began to mount. He knew that the building was nine stories high and that he would have only two flights to climb to reach the roof. One flight brought him to another deserted hallway, another row of open

doors, another corridor littered with trash; the next flight brought him face to face with a girl.

She had on a wonderful evening wrap of ermine and lace that covered her from her throat to her feet; a wide ermine hat, decorated with sweeping white and black plumes was fastened upon her dark hair; and she wore white gloves. She sat upon the top step, her hands lying still in her lap, her big brown eyes gazing dreamily through the railings to where the fire raged three flights below, her thick dark lashes curled against her cheek. Behind her, the trap leading out upon the roof stood open, showing the red-gold sky of dawn, and a cold sharp wind beat in upon her, carrying with it particles of snow.

Cole stopped a few steps below her, removed his cap, and waited for her to turn, wondering if he looked as unusual as she. Then his eyes wandered slowly from her down his own garments, and with a smile he acknowledged that he did. Two pink-pajama legs were visible below the tan ulster, and his bronzed ankles showed between the pajamas and the mules. From the pajamas up, however, he was presentable, for the coat was buttoned securely about him, and the collar turned up. When his eyes sought her face again, he saw that she had become aware of his presence and had risen.

"May I come up, please?" he asked in a matter-of-fact tone of voice.

She caught her breath with a little gasp.

"I'm so glad you're here," she cried unsteadily. "I've been — almost *praying* for you — for someone. My maid grew hysterical and ran for it — leaving me to get out by myself — as best I could — and I was the only one to think of the roof. The rest all went down. But it took me so long to dress — and I couldn't find things — and I was afraid to go further by myself. It's frightfully cold and gray out there."

She was regarding him wistfully, out of wide, dark eyes.

He nodded.

"People do lose their heads distressingly, don't they?" he offered calmly. "I

almost forgot my cigarets, but I remembered them at the last minute. They are specials, and it would have taken a week or two to get more. Fancy!"

And he tapped the cedar-wood box affectionately, his blue eyes smiling.

The girl raised her eye-brows in some surprise, her eyes traveling from the good looking bronzed face, down the pink-pajama legs and bare ankles to the embroidered Japanese slippers — and suddenly she smiled.

"Were your cigarets of more importance than some warm clothes?"

"Didn't have time," he answered regretfully. "I hope you'll pardon my unusual appearance, but the situation is a bit unusual, you know. I had just time enough to gather up my *most valuable* possessions, and of course, under the circumstances, a coat and my cigarets were the most valuable. I should have frozen without the coat. I should have been unhappy without the cigarets. Other things, one can do without."

Her smile deepened as she straightened her big plumed hat, and a curious expression flashed into her eyes. He thought that her manner toward him had altered somewhat when she spoke again.

"I suppose," she ventured absently, "I look rather unusual myself. But these things happened to be handiest, and I put them on. I was glad enough to get into anything presentable, I assure you. The consolation is that there are quite a few who look even more ludicrous than I do. I saw a very stout man in a night-cap and red blanket, with nothing on his feet; and a woman in a picture hat and — eh — the usual night-wear, you know. She had a poodle under one arm and a huge Five O'clock Tea under the other. It didn't amuse me much at the moment, however."

They laughed together, the girl with her hands thrust into the pockets of her ermine coat, the man hugging his cedar-wood box, while below them, the flames crept hungrily along the walls, and the spirals of blue-gray smoke curled upward. And then in an instant, Cole's attention was attracted to the progress of the fire, and his natural common-sense returned.

"I think we'd better have a look about," he said, calmly. "This is merely a temporary refuge, of course, and we'll have to map out our next move. I didn't fancy being raked out of bed so early at first, but I'm beginning to think this rather a lark, you know. Pardon my going first, wont you?"

He wriggled his mules on more securely, and stepped through the open door, out upon the roof, and turned to help her. As she followed him across the sill, he noticed that she was wearing dainty white satin slippers, but he made no comment. Instead, he hugged his box ecstatically and feasted his eyes upon the prospect spread out before them. The sky to the East was stained with red-gold and lavender, pink and blue, and the sun as it fell over the snow-covered roofs, caused them to glisten with white fire.

"Reminds me of a tinsel on a Christmas-tree," he announced whimsically, turning to the girl. "I don't often see the sun rise, you know, and I'm sure I've never seen a finer color scheme — on canvas or off. Could you imagine a mortal artist combining such shades as those — convincingly?"

His teeth chattered with cold as he spoke, and he stamped from one foot to the other.

"I'm glad you are enjoying it," she replied. "Personally, I'd prefer to find shelter somewhere. I'm really not so completely dressed, you know, as one might think — and cold penetrates."

The wind had blown a curling tendril of dark hair along her cheek, and he admired the effect as he faced her.

"I beg your pardon," he said, contritely. "I'm a very unreliable person in an emergency, I'm afraid. Unusual situations require unusual men, you know. Now if I were in a novel, I should probably know exactly what to do next, but as I have never seen a roof before — to my positive knowledge, why—I'm a bit handicaped. Put me into an ordinary situation, and I shine, but —"

"I shouldn't take you for a conventional person, by any means," she ventured.

"Oh — I'm not conventional. I don't mean just that, but — well, scenery is

liable to monopolize my attention rather than cold feet, and —"

"Cigarets rather than clothes," she finished for him. "I see."

He laughed and turned his attention to the next stage of the journey, seeking the easiest means of escape. The next building to the right was a few stories lower; to the left was a cross-street, for the "Montana" was a corner building. No hope from either quarter. Before them was Broadway — no hope from that direction; behind them — ah — behind them — across the square central court stood the second of the row — the "Idaho." They could no doubt reach it easily by walking half a block along the roof. It was simple enough. He started off a little in advance of her and squinted at the prospect.

"There's one nasty bit," he said, turning back to her thoughtfully, "but I think you can do it. It requires just a cool head, that's all. The footing is firm enough, and it is very much easier than going down nine flights on a fire-ladder. What do you say?"

"You mean that bit skirting the tanks?" she asked, shivering and peering ahead through the half-light.

"Yes."

"All right. I shall be able to do it, I think, if you'll come behind me to steady me."

He nodded contentedly, and they started off.

In the court, the fire and smoke were pouring from half of the windows, and the morning quiet was shattered by the noise of the fire-axes and the shouting of men's voices. Cole, glancing eagerly over the wall, saw that the firemen had gone to work in the wing nearest the "Idaho" first, so that the second of the row was in no apparent danger.

"Do you know," he said chuckling, "I've never been in a fire before. I've often read about 'em in the papers and in books, but the actual experience is quite new to me. It doesn't thrill me nearly so much as it did in print."

She considered the point gravely.

"Well, I was a little excited — just at first, you know — when I couldn't find my clothes and the smoke was pouring

in the room. And then again, when I reached the roof, and realized that I was all alone up there and that everyone else had gone *downstairs*. But I *didn't* relive my past life, I rejoice to say, or think how much better I might have been, or anything of that sort. The writer-people always do put in things like that, you know, but then, I've always found them a silly lot, anyway. I just wondered if I'd better wait to find a fur coat, or go as I was, and I cried a few tears because I couldn't take at least a bag. I did see a man with a trunk, actually."

"I don't believe I stopped to think," he said, laughing. "I just cut out."

If she had been watching him, she would have seen that his color had deepened during the course of her remarks, but she was apparently interested in the sky-line about her.

As they came to the difficult part of the way, he stepped behind her and put his left hand gently upon her shoulder.

"Now, don't look down," he advised, "although the impulse to do so will be almost irresistible—and don't try to hurry. Walk naturally."

In their track were great tanks, placed side by side and occupying most of the space, so that they were compelled to walk close to the wall, overlooking a drop of nine stories. The railing was

about a foot high, incapable of withstanding the slightest pressure, and below them, the din continued unabated. Cole dared not imagine the consequences if she should grow dizzy and waver, but

she followed his directions implicitly, and fixing her eyes before her, allowed him to guide her safely to the roof of the rear wing. And even after she was in safety and the strain was relaxed, she did not faint or cry out, though she went a bit pale for an instant and drew in her breath rather sharply. Then she straightened her plumed hat, patted the collar of her coat into shape, and moved on.

As he went on beside her, he regarded her curiously and with wondering eyes. She seemed very young—he would have put her age at twenty-three or four—and yet she had almost the courage and coolness of a man. He admired that tremendously. He had always wondered what men could see in women of the timid, shrinking sort. He couldn't imagine how one could accept the responsibility of mar-

rying them, for in the event of difficulties, which are always possible, they would surely be more hindrance than help. This one, he decided, noting the resolute set of her head, was the sort to stand beside a man and fight with him—no matter what the obstacle to overcome.



"I'm a very unreliable person"

And she had a sense of humor, too; that was of paramount importance.

By that time they had reached the roof of the "Idaho," and the sounds of the conflagration were too far to be heard. Cole tried the door of the roof, mumbled an inarticulate something, and turned to her with a smile.

"It's locked," he said. "We'll go to the next one — the 'Arkansas' it is, I believe — and try that. It will be farther off, anyway, and there will be less chance of our being routed out if the fire gains on them. What's the trouble?"

"Where's your other slipper?" she asked, frowning.

"Oh, I lost it *en route*; kicked it off, if you must know, to have a more secure footing. It's of small importance, really. The snow isn't so cold as you might suppose."

She glanced at his face in silence, and they went on again.

This time there was no "nasty bit" to cross and they were on the roof of the third building in another minute. Here, the door was unlocked, and Cole invited her ceremoniously into the hallway. It was a very pretty hallway — far prettier than the hallway of the "Montana" — and they surveyed their surroundings with satisfaction. As he closed the door behind him, the girl seated herself upon the top step and crouched down among her furs.

"Now — what?" she asked, shivering. "I'm starved — and nearly frozen — and you've — you've got to do something for your foot."

"We might go down in the elevator," he suggested, "and get a cab from the door?"

"The cab-stand is two blocks away — at the corner," she said. "Besides — where should we go?"

"I don't know anyone upon whom I could descend at this hour for an indefinite stay, and I hardly think a hotel would take us in. We'd be much wiser to wait and see how great our loss is. I'm on the eighth floor, and they *might* be able to save some of my things."

He smiled with sudden inspiration, and crossing the hall, examined the name-plates on the nearest doors.

"Kirby — Scott — Jones," he read off in a whisper. "Which sounds the most humane and tender-hearted?"

"Are you going to ask shelter?" she wanted to know.

"Only sensible thing to do. Let me see. Jones might be anyone from a retired butcher to a wine-salesman, so we'll eliminate him. Heads for Kirby — tails for Scott."

He drew a five dollar gold-piece from the pocket of his ulster and flipped it into the air. It landed with a ring upon the marble floor between them.

"The decision is in favor of Kirby," announced Cole, and he placed his finger upon the bell marked Scott.

"I really dislike this very much," he confided to her, "but necessity is the mother of compulsion. Whom do you guess will come?"

"Mr. Scott — with an ax," she suggested, her eyes fixed eagerly upon the door.

"The cook," he guessed, grinning.

But nobody came.

"They are disgustingly heavy sleepers," he said. "It's a vulgar trait. But nethinks I heard a door close. I'm afraid we shall receive no warm welcome here."

Nevertheless, he rang again — a prolonged ring — and waited, listening. Still no response.

"Perhaps you'd better knock," she suggested from the steps. "I daresay the bell doesn't ring."

"I'm doing my knocking mentally," he said. "As a matter of fact, I hear the bell quite distinctly, and I promise you they shall, too, before I have done with them."

An air of determination had crept into his bearing.

"Why not try Mrs. Kirby?" she asked, nervously. "It's a lovely, kind-sounding name."

"No, thanks, Scott — or — *How* do you do!"

His sentence was cut short by the opening of the door, and he bowed gravely to the individual who confronted him. It was a small sized, slender little man with a queer shaped nose, waxed mustachios, and very small bright black eyes.



The little man uttered a profound sigh and threw open the door

"I beg your pardon for disturbing you," said Cole politely, "but the 'Montana,' three buildings away, is burning down, and we've escaped across the roofs. I wonder if you'd take us in for a bit?"

The little man uttered a profound sigh and threw open the door, his face lighting up.

"Fire?" he cried, "*Mon dieu!* I have not heard. *Certainment!* This way, if you please."

He led on to the dining-room at the back, where a fire was burning in the open grate and the remains of a light lunch were scattered over the polished table-top.

"*Monsieur et Madame* arre—out of town," he explained, "but they would wish that I offair you 'ospitality. Is the fire—eh—much?"

"I suppose so," responded Cole, lazily. "We didn't wait to estimate the loss. I

say, could you lend me a pair of slippers, old man? I lost mine on the roof."

"*Mon dieu!*" he cried, shivering, his little eyes seeming to start from his head. "But for one moment, *monsieur.*"

He almost fled through the doorway, closing it behind him, however, and was back in an instant with a pair of blue silk bed-room slippers, fur lined, and very comfortable.

"Many thanks," said Cole, gratefully.

"Eet is nossing, *monsieur,*" replied their host, deprecatingly. "And now—you will not be av-erse to breakfas', *non?* You will ac-cep'?"

"Breakfast?" cried Cole and the girl in an eager breath.

"Me, I 'ave an errand," he went on warmly, "an' I am compel' to go out—but there is much in the lardair—if you will be so good to 'elp yourselves. Every-thing is at your disposal. My mastair, 'e is ver' generous man. 'E would wish eet

so." And with that he bowed elaborately and withdrew, closing the door behind him.

"Whatever — ?" gasped the girl.

"The *chef*, I suppose," Cole put in.

"Isn't he strange? I wonder if his generous master will be as pleased with our advent as he seems to think. Fancy his leaving us alone here in the flat!"

"There probably isn't much to take if we *should* be inclined to steal," answered Cole. "The people are out of town, he said, so everything is packed away, most likely. Besides, my face was an assurance of honesty."

"Hm," she replied, ignoring his last remark. "There doesn't seem to be much of value about, now you mention it. The silver's gone — even the cutlery." She slid open a drawer as she spoke and peeped in. "I suppose that's why he showed us in here, and he's probably gone now to corroborate our story of the fire."

"Well, we shall do very well with kitchen-ware," he decided. "I move we adjourn to the culinary rebions at once. I'm famished."

"Second the motion," she replied, enthusiastically. "Can you cook?"

"Not very much," said Cole. "In fact, to be absolutely truthful, I've never tried, but I've always felt that I could if the necessity arose. This is evidently the kitchen."

As he spoke, they passed through a little passage which served as a sort of pantry, and entered the cook's domains.

"The range would lead me to that conclusion," she laughed. "I smell coffee."

"Right-O! Here it is, and the fire's going under it, too. Now you sit down while I examine into the contents of the refrigerator. I noticed it back there in the pantry."

He placed his cedar-wood box carefully upon the kitchen-table, opened it, and looked at her inquiringly.

"Go ahead," she assented. "I suppose you think you deserve it."

He selected a cigaret, lighted it, inhaled slowly, and then sauntered off towards the ice-box. The girl, meanwhile, divested herself of her plumed hat and heavy coat, disclosing beneath it a decol-

leté gown of pale blue satin, embroidered with sprays of pearls and emeralds. Over it, she tied a small white lacey apron that hung upon a peg by the door; then, rolling back her sleeves, she set to work. Finding the china-repository, she brought out cups and saucers, plates, and bread-and-butter plates for two. Underneath the china-cupboard stood the bread-box. In this, she discovered a nice fat brown twist, with poppy-seeds decorating the top, and this she began to slice with the queer little bread-saw hanging upon the door.

As she finished, and was busying herself about the arrangement of the kitchen-table, Cole returned, and regarded her, his eyes full of laughter. He brought one platter containing ham, one grapefruit (very large) some butter in a blue crock, four eggs, and a bottle of cream.

"Great!" he called encouragingly. "I have a regular Robinson Crusoe feeling, you know. We might just as well be shipwrecked on an island. The effect is the same. I call it highly exciting to go prowling about foraging for food and all that, not knowing where anything is or what you are likely to find. We're the survivors, you see. We really owe that *chef* chap a lot for introducing us to the situation."

She watched him dispose of his plunder, a white damask breakfast cloth suspended in mid air, her eyes troubled.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing, though?" she wanted to know. "It strikes me we are making mighty free with poor Mrs. Scott's breakfast."

"Oh, there are quantities of eggs out there, and five or six more grapefruit, and hordes of other things. Besides, Mrs. Scott is out of town, you know. Her own *chef* said so, and he ought to know. I'm perfectly willing to make a tour of the house, however, if you like."

"Nonsense," she objected hastily. "You mustn't go prying about. He might come back and catch you at it. Are you going to cook those eggs?"

"Certainly. Why?"

"I just wondered. It doesn't matter much. I'm not terribly fond of them."

"You're heartless, if you are casting reflections. I've *always* had a wild desire

to cook ham and eggs, though I have only a theoretical knowledge of the process. As a child, I used to dream of it. Many sleepless nights I have considered the question. You might be fixing the grapefruit, meanwhile, if you like. I wonder what you cook it in?"

"You don't cook grapefruit."

"Although peculiar, or even eccentric, I'll admit, I am not utterly lacking in common-sense," he answered, gravely. "I meant the ham and eggs."

"In a frying-pan, of course. You'll find them in the lower part of the cupboard, there."

"That sounds logical," he mused. "Is it small and fat and deep, with a wire handle, or square and black with a top and handles on the ends, or round and flat with a long handle, or —"

"That's it—the last one you touched," she answered, laughing. "Hadn't you better let me do them? It would be a pity to spoil the eggs. Eggs are dreadfully expensive, one hears."

"Oh, there are plenty of them in there," he assured her, "so if I should spoil a few, six or eight of them would never be missed. Besides, it would be a pity to deprive me of this golden opportunity. I was taught at school to seize every opportunity—lest it never come again. I know exactly how I want them, you see. I've often thought about it. The ham must be fried—not hard—but thoroughly—with the edges crisp and crumbly and rich; and the eggs must be *very* tenderly done. Do you put anything in the pan first—to keep it from smoking this way?"

"Whew!" she cried, turning up her nose. "A little butter, of course."

She went on working the sharp pointed knife under the rind of the fruit as she spoke.

"There, that's the stunt, of course. Great. Now, I don't suppose it matters whether you put in the ham or the eggs first?"

"Shall I finish them?" she offered, turning agreeably.

"No, thank you. I guess I'll put in the ham first, because that stays together better than eggs do. Have you a — er — fork handy, please?"

She laughed and brought him one.

"I see we are going to do this together," she said. "That's all right. Don't keep fussing with it or it won't have a chance to fry."

They stood side by side before the range, their eyes fastened eagerly upon the cooking meat. A delicious odor hung faintly in the air. The girl let out a very soft little sigh of content, and Cole looked down at her vaguely. She was a wonderfully attractive girl. He couldn't remember ever having seen such skin or eyes or lips or hair. It would be bully, he thought, if they could go skylarking about this way always—just the two of them. They seemed to hit it off so well together.

"Turn it over! Turn it over!" she cried, excitedly. "Do you want to spoil my breakfast, Crazy Man? *Now* put in the eggs. *Hurry!*"

Cole reflected, surveying an egg out of wide, earnest eyes.

"How do you get it out of the shell?" he asked, practically.

"Break the shell, of course."

"How?"

"Hit it in the center with a knife. That separates the shell into halves, and retaining one half in each hand, you let the contents run into the pan."

He frowned uncertainly and shook his head.

"You'd better do it," he said. "It sounds like the sort of thing you can't learn theoretically."

As she broke in the eggs with a practiced hand, he lighted another cigaret, retired to the kitchen-rocker and began to smoke. It was warm and sunny and the little blue and white kitchen was a very comfortable place indeed. He forgot all about the burning "Montana" in his perfect content.

"This is a mighty cozy little place," he remarked, conversationally, his blue eyes wandering about. "I'm surprised they'd go away from it. It must be nice to have a kitchen of one's own. I've never had one."

"Men don't — as a rule," she answered sensibly.

"My family never had one either, you know," he explained. "My father and I



have always had rooms somewhere, so we hadn't one, even when I was a youngster. We never went to housekeeping. There's something rather attractive about 'em, you know."

"I suppose there is," she assented. "I've not been in one for years myself. I used to like to cook things when I was at home—especially cocoanut-pie. I was great at cocoanut-pie."

"Bully!" he cried out eagerly. "Let's have one now? If there's one thing I love more than another, it's cocoanut-pie—deep, wide ones, you know, with golden-brown crust, and golden filling, and fluffy white tops. *Um-yum.*"

"But it wouldn't be quite the thing," she objected, "under the circumstances. We've been invited to cook our own breakfasts—not to try our hand at desserts! It would be different if this were our *own* kitchen. *Then* we could cook what we liked."

"But lots of people eat pie for breakfast," he pointed out to her.

"You don't—and neither do I," she answered, "and anyway, it would take heaps and heaps of time, and all the other things would spoil."

"I wish we *had* a kitchen of our own," he said, discontentedly. "I don't see why other people should have everything. I shall never rest peacefully until I get a nice little blue and white one like this. I shall start out in search of one this very day—and *then*—you can make a perfect sea of cocoanut pies."

"In *your* kitchen?" she asked.

"My very own one."

She rearranged the table, adding the necessary cutlery.

"But I can't, you know," she said. "I'm sorry—but I don't *know* you."

"Oh!" he cried in astonishment, and then they both laughed.

She began to serve the ham and eggs, the frown in her eyes indicating the delicacy of the operation, and not until she set down the pan with a sigh was he able to breathe. He sniffed in the delicious savory odor with a smile of complete satisfaction.

"I don't know even your *name*," she added, "and you are in the same fix regarding me."

"Well?" he asked, argumentatively.

"Well?" Her brown eyes regarded him seriously.

"Aren't our chances even then? Neither of us has an advantage."

"Yes—you *have*," she objected. "If I were not the proper sort of person for you to know, you would be none the worse for associating with me, but if you were not the proper sort of person for *me* to know, my reputation would suffer if I were so much as *seen* with you."

"But I am just the very chap you should know," he assured her candidly.

"Really, I'm an awfully *nice* sort of chap, amiable and agreeable and kind to animals, and no bad habits—unless you count smoking. And I belong to some very good clubs, and my family is quite old and respectable, and I'm not in debt, and I have some money."

"That would be a very satisfactory reference—if anyone else gave it to me," she smiled, "but you—well you are slightly prejudiced, you know. Isn't the coffee delicious?"

"I shouldn't wonder—but I don't think I'm much interested in coffee, now."

"Appetite gratified?"

She looked at him innocently.

"No—that's not the reason. Guess again."

"How are my ham and eggs?" she went on, ignoring him.

"My ham and eggs, you mean?" he corrected her, scowling. "I didn't think you would actually try to deprive me of the credit."

"Don't you both mean *my* ham and eggs?" asked a third voice, grimly, from behind them. They turned in swift astonishment to find lounging in the doorway, a tall, broad-shouldered, dark haired man in a blue-silk dressing-gown; and one glance informed them both that a revolver was sticking from his right-hand pocket. Had an elephant suddenly made its appearance there instead of a mild looking dark haired man, their surprise and consternation could not have been greater.

"Mr. Scott?" asked Cole rising, and confronting the newcomer inquiringly.

"Your perspicacity is little less than

marvelous," replied Scott, pleasantly. "I confess myself worsted, sir."

He had a pleasant voice, low pitched, with traces of the Southern accent in it, and he drawled slightly when he spoke.

"My name is Cole," answered that gentleman calmly. "William Carrington Cole — not to curtail."

"Thank you," said the gentleman in the dressing-gown, accepting the introduction with a smile.

His eyes began to twinkle with amusement as they swept from the serious bronzed face and grave blue eyes, down the tan ulster to the pink pajama legs and bare ankles below. "I've read a number of your stories, sir, and I have enjoyed them so thoroughly that I consider it an honor to entertain you — even so unexpectedly and so inappropriately."

"Thank you," answered Cole with a bow, his blue eyes beginning to gleam.

"And I am — Julianne Grenning," put in the girl in a low voice, her dark eyes flashing from Scott's to Cole's.

Cole stared at her in astonishment, his face flushing, but Scott replied with a bow and a smile:

"I have worshiped across the footlights often enough to recognize your face. Your humble obedient servant, *madame*."

"Then — you were *not* out of town," cried Cole, in some bewilderment, turning to his host.

"Well — no. As a matter of fact, I was bound and gagged in my bedroom," drawled Scott airily, "so that the gentleman who admitted you could relieve us of sundry jewels and silver plate."

"*What?*" cried the others in chorus.

"Mrs. Scott was more lightly bound and she succeeded in freeing herself after some difficulty. We gave up trying to make you hear us."

"Then you knew —?" cried the girl.

"We heard the scamp admit you — heard all that went on at the door, you know. Our ears weren't bound. And anyway, he told us when he came back for the blue slippers. They are mine. I hope you've both been quite comfortable — and that you'll pardon me for startling you. I never could resist the opportunity to play a harmless joke."

"Don't mention it," said Cole smiling.

"Have a cigaret?"

"Thank you," answered Scott, accepting one from the box the other extended. "Mrs. Scott is dressing and will be with us presently. I think perhaps it wouldn't be a half bad idea for me to follow her example, and if you would accept some of my things, Mr. Cole, I should be delighted to serve you."

Cole struck a match and handed it to his host.

"I should be most grateful," he said. "I confess my costume is more striking than comfortable."

"Then pardon me a moment," said Scott, "and I'll ask my wife to entertain Miss Grenning."

He strode off through the dining-room and out of sight, and Cole turned to the girl, his blue eyes reproachful.

"You knew me all along," he declared grimly. "I saw it in your eyes when you spoke to Scott. And you didn't tell me."

"Yes," she admitted, facing bravely — but her eyelids drooped before his exultant smile.

"And to think that I didn't recognize you," he cried, "when we actually grew up together."

"I was only ten when you saw me last — and you were twelve."

"But *you* knew *me*," he insisted. "Why — I wrote a story to you. It was all about you — how wonderful you were — and how I loved you — when I was twelve and you were ten — and how I wanted to find you again."

"I know," she confessed, "I recognized it. Not that it was anything like me, of course — but — the name supplied a clew — and — the incident of the love-letter — I remembered."

"It was my first love-letter," he told her, his blue eyes gazing straight into hers, "and my last, too. To think that the same roof has been covering us, dear."

She looked up, trying to raise her slender brows in surprise, but the warm color stole up under her white skin, and her head drooped.

"*Dear*," he repeated defiantly, leaning toward her.

And then they heard the patter of Scott's slippers coming back.



"Do you happen to remember whether he took a cab?"

The Episode of the Prince's Pearls

BY HORACE HAZELTINE

Author of "The City of Encounters," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY RALEIGH

MR. NICHOLAS REMSEN VAN VOORST was bored. It was such an old story to him—this night life on the Great White Way. But to the lad who sat opposite to him it was a revelation brimming with interest, and so the older man was holding himself to his task of entertainment by occasional stimulation at the fount of his young companion's always evident and sometimes contagious delight.

Van Voorst's eldest married sister, who was the lad's mother and lived in Colorado Springs, had confided her offspring to her brother's care in the metropolis pending the youngster's going on

to New Haven for the beginning of his Freshman year.

It was not Jack Basilea's first visit to New York, but it was his first visit since coming to man's estate. Hitherto he had been regarded as a child and had been taken to the Hippodrome and to the Eden Musée. But to-night, wearing the conventional evening-clothes of masculine maturity, he had dined with his Uncle at Sherry's, had sat in a front-row seat at the Casino, and was now having supper in a popular upper Broadway restaurant, where the lights and the music and the odors of food and wine and flowers and tobacco smoke were for

him scarcely less potent agents of exhilaration than those pointed-out celebrities of the stage and notabilities of the world of sport who crowded so close often as actually to rub his elbows.

It was early yet—not half-past eleven—but the room was suffocatingly hot and close. Van Voorst had tentatively remarked the fact, but Jack had failed to rise to the suggestion. Whereat the older man had smiled indulgently; and then, swinging around in his chair to make first survey of the assembled company, had seen that which gave at least a languid filip to his lagging interest. On a direct line with him, two tables away, sat a man and a woman to whom the sensational press had from time to time devoted columns of valuable space—a man he once had known well and a woman he had known slightly.

"Jack," he said, swinging back, "there's a couple over there that you've probably heard of." And he indicated the location of their table. "They are the Freddie Demorests. You know who old Judge Demorest is. Well, that is his scapegrace son and his chorus-girl daughter-in-law."

The boy was instantly all attention.

"Oh, yes, I know, Uncle Nicholas. I read the other day how young Demorest had run through his fortune and how his wife was going back to the stage again."

"Exactly. Freddie Demorest is a cad, Jack. We were at Yale together, and he proved his right to the title even then."

"He's a smart looking chap," Jack observed after a furtive glance. "And—" Then he looked again. "By Jove, Uncle Nick, I remember his wife! We saw her to-night. She was one of those girls in the yellow and gold Chinese costumes—the prettiest one of them all."

Van Voorst nodded.

"I dare say," he replied. "I didn't recognize her, myself. She comes from Virginia, Jack, of a very good family. Her people were poor, though, and as she was pretty and had a good voice the chorus seemed to offer the most available means of livelihood. She was a remarkably bright girl, too, and a

thoroughly good one. Well, it wasn't long before Freddie Demorest managed to meet her and their wedding followed in about three months. Then she left the stage and they went abroad. That was two years ago. Now, Freddie is down and out and Mabel has gone back to earning her own living."

"What a rotten shame!" Jack commented, and fell to openly regarding the subjects of their conversation.

Mabel Demorest possessed a refinement of beauty uncommon in the ranks of her profession—natural blonde, with wide, almost pathetic, blue eyes, and a complexion rarely fair, her profile was of classic regularity. Jack admired, too, the simplicity of her severe, tailored frock and small, close-fitting toque, which were in becoming contrast with the garish gowns and flamboyant hats of most of the other women in the restaurant.

"I don't like Demorest's face," he observed, presently. "There's something mean and sneaking about it."

"Right, my boy," Van Voorst returned. "His face is less of a liar than he is."

And as he spoke he turned to verify the lad's judgment, and saw that husband and wife were engaged in argument. The man was leaning far over the table. He was frowning and his face was very red. He spoke low but earnestly, and at every word the woman's eyes grew more pathetic and her cheeks more pallid. She answered, emotionally, through compressed lips, sitting straight and rigid, her back pressed to her chair, her hands nervously clasping the table edge.

"The blackguard!" Van Voorst breathed the word in unconscious voicing of his thought.

Jack heard it.

At that moment Mrs. Demorest screamed. Demorest had snatched up an object which lay near his wife's plate and was already making his way in haste towards the door.

At the woman's cry, every eye in the restaurant was turned towards her, but the view was instantly blocked by the rush forward of many men. Patrons and waiters elbowed one another in their



Two tables away sat a man and a woman to whom the sensational press had devoted columns of valuable space

effort to succor. Only two men moved the other way. One was Demorest, the other was Nicholas Van Voorst.

Not until the fleeing husband had reached the door, however, did his pursuer overtake him, startling him by a heavy hand dropped suddenly and gripingly upon his shoulder.

Demorest turned angrily.

"Oh, it's you!" he cried, sullenly. Well, what do you want?"

"I want you," Van Voorst told him. "I want—"

But the other cut him short.

"In Heaven's name, man!" he cried, desperately. "My wife is ill. I'm going for medicine for her—for a physician."

And he wrenched himself free, as his captor, astonished and questioning, relaxed his hold.

For a moment Van Voorst stood dazed. When he realized the explanation had been a subterfuge, Demorest was gone. He turned back, fuming, to where the crowd pressed about the table of the deserted woman. On the throng's outer edge, Jack awaited him.

"What did he say?" the youth asked.

"Say!" repeated Van Voorst, his annoyance in his voice. "He lied, of course. What does Mrs. Demorest say?"

"She says she heard bad news, that is all."

"And therefore she must be mortified and humiliated by this mob staring at her, eh? Well, we'll see about that. In the meantime, Jack, you make haste and get our hats and coats like a good fellow."

Roughly he forced himself through the crowding, craning press, shouldering men aside as he went. On the inner edge of the circle he faced the proprietor of the establishment who, with upraised hands and quiet voice was endeavoring to quell the excitement and disperse the gathering.

"Gentlemen!" he was saying. "Go back to your seats, if you please. Everything is all right. The lady is all right."

He recognized Van Voorst and nodded, smiling.

"There's nothing you can do—" he began.

But Van Voorst interrupted him.

"Mrs. Demorest is an old friend," he said.

Mrs. Demorest heard him, and looked up, with sudden, relieved recognition.

Bending across the table he took her hand.

"Come!" he urged. "Let me take you out, and get a cab for you."

She hastened to make compliance. The orchestra was playing again now, a loud, brazen-noted march, and the proprietor was having his way with the curious on-lookers. Reluctantly they were returning to their hurriedly deserted tables.

"If there is anything I can do," Van Voorst suggested, as Mrs. Demorest and he moved towards the door, "I shall be only too glad."

Jack had appeared with the hats and coats and Van Voorst had casually presented him to the lady. Now she glanced at the lad who was a step or two ahead.

"Oh, don't mind him," Van Voorst hastened to assure her. "He'll help. He's my nephew, you know, and of the same stock."

She was still palpably nervous and distressed, but a wan smile came at her companion's words.

"There is something you can try to do," she admitted. "It is rather embarrassing to tell about it, though."

"I'll send Jack away, if you like."

"Oh, no, no, I don't mind."

But when the three of them were in a taxicab scurrying northward—she had given an address in Harlem—she hesitated to voice her request.

"Let me help you," Van Voorst proposed. "When Freddie made his sudden exit to-night, he took something with him that belonged to you, didn't he?"

She clutched his arm in quick excitement. "How did you know?" she asked.

"I saw him."

"He took something that didn't belong to me," she explained, now contrastingly anxious to tell all. "Something very valuable; something I wished to return to the owner."

"Yes," Van Voorst encouraged.

"Something I *must* return," she went on, with increasing agitation, "that I must—I must—I must."

"Why?"

The bluntness of the question checked her threatened hysteria, and she paused, panting.

"Why?" she repeated. "Because to accept such a gift would be impossible—"

"Oh, it was a gift, was it? You see, I am still in the dark, Mrs. Demorest. Would you mind beginning at the beginning and telling me, just as concisely and quickly as you can, all about it? Then if I can help you, you may depend upon me."

Already he gathered that he was about to be called upon to recover stolen property.

"Yes," the young woman made answer. "I'll try to tell it that way, though it's hard to fix just where the beginning is. Maybe you know Prince del Argo. Do you, Mr. Van Voorst?"

"By reputation," he answered, adding *sotto voce*, "if he may be said to have any."

"That's just it. He seems to have seen my picture in the papers when I decided to return to the stage, and he began writing me letters. The first one I read, of course, not knowing whom it was from until I did so. The second I gave to Fred. After that, I tore them up. They have been coming daily. Sometimes two and three a day, with flowers and books and candy, which I invariably gave away. He has begged everybody about the theatre that he could possibly reach to arrange a meeting with me. But of course I have refused. If Fred were half a man he would have stopped him long ago. But Fred only laughed when I told him. He seemed to think it a good joke. And to-night, when I got to my dressing room, I found this last—this supreme insult. He had had the effrontery to send me a string of pearls with a diamond clasp. I suppose I should have sent it back at once, but I thought that this—if anything in the world could—must arouse Fred to a sense of his duty as a gentleman, if not as a husband. So I waited until I could show the wretched thing to him. And what do you suppose he said?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Van Voorst answered.

He had a very fair idea, but he hesitated to let the fellow's wife know that he held her husband in such utter contempt. He knew Prince del Argo, too, better than he admitted, and of the pair it was a question with him which was the more despicable.

"He said it was worth two thousand dollars if it was worth a penny," she announced. "I could have killed him!"

"I can't say that I blame you," Van Voorst averred. "And then?"

"I told him that it must go back to the Prince, to-night. Then he declared that I was a fool, that the Prince had millions, and that it would be the funniest kind of a joke for me to keep the pearls. I stared at him in contemptuous amazement.

"You won't keep them?" he asked.

"I have kept them too long already," I replied.

"And then, when I had showed him the wrapper of the box and how I had addressed it to the Prince at his hotel, I asked him to have a messenger-boy called. But he refused and grew very angry.

"'You shall not send them back,' he declared. 'I can borrow a thousand on them anywhere,' he went on, 'and God knows I need a thousand just now.' I had re-wrapped the box and it lay on the table by my plate. I began to tell him, then, what I thought of him, and before I had uttered five words he had reached across, snatched up the parcel, and was striding towards the door. Do you wonder I screamed?"

Jack, who was sitting forward on the edge of the seat between them, muttered for the first time. But neither of them was conscious of it.

"You must have the pearls back, of course," Van Voorst said, with decision.

"I don't want them back," Mrs. Demorest returned. "I want Prince del Argo to have them as quickly as possible. I never want to see them again."

"I understand."

As she had told her story Nicholas Van Voorst had been busy with the possibilities of tracing Demorest. The difficulties surrounding the undertaking he did not minimize. Circumstances had



"I had rewrapped the box and it lay on the table by my plate"

already given the scapegrace a good start, and to find his trail and follow it appeared next to hopeless. But the greater the obstacle, the more futile appearing the quest, the keener was his desire for overcoming, the more determined his resolve to pursue.

"My dear lady," he continued after a moment's thought, "every minute I stop in this cab lessens our chances of success. Jack will go on with you. He'll see you safely to your door. But I must get to work at once. I am going to find Freddie, and I am going to get those pearls and return them to the Prince, for you, if it takes me a week to do it."

"A week!" she exclaimed, disappointedly. "Oh, think of—But there! I do not mean to seem ungrateful. Really, I don't. It is so good of you to—"

"A week is an outside possibility. I used it as a figure. If it takes an eternity, I might have said. Have no uneasiness. The Prince shall have his jewels with his morning coffee."

He spoke with an easy confidence, and when, at his direction the taxicab stopped at the next corner, and the light from a street-lamp invaded the vehicle, Mabel Demorest, turning thankful eyes upon him, saw in his strong, handsome face and athletic figure, that which gave added assurance of success.

He spoke just a word to Jack as he stepped out. Then raising his hat with one hand and slamming the cab door with the other, he darted down the stairway of the Columbus Circle Subway station at the entrance to which he had alighted.

There fortune provided an incoming train, and five minutes later he was back at the door of the restaurant which he had quitted in hot haste but a short time before. The white lights blazed from windows and doorways and with the music of violins which filtered to the street was mingled the babel of strident voices, and the hoarse notes of boisterous laughter.

But Van Voorst was blind and deaf to all save a short, chunky man in blue uniform who was busy opening cab doors.

He caught his elbow just as he had sent away one hansom and stood waiting for another.

"Just a minute, John," he claimed. "You know Mr. Demorest, don't you?"

"Sure I do, Mr. Van Voorst."

"He left here within the last half hour. Do you happen to remember whether he took a cab?"

"He took a motor, sir."

"You're sure?"

"Very sure, sir. It had just dropped a party here. It's one of the motors on the stand, yonder. I know the 'shofer,' sir."

"You didn't hear the direction he gave, I suppose?" Van Voorst asked.

"No, sir, I did not, sir. He just jumped in and was off in a minute, sir. I remember he seemed in a fierce hurry."

"What's the chauffeur's name?"

"Callahan, sir."

Van Voorst slipped John two half-dollars, and dodged out into the middle of Longacre Square, where a half dozen motor cars stood ready for hire. Promptly he was surrounded.

"I want Callahan," he said.

"Callahan's not here," came the answer in chorus.

"He'll be back, I suppose," Van Voorst suggested.

But no one thought so. Each was intent on securing the customer for himself.

"He took a party out to Woodmansten Inn," one of the clamorous ones volunteered.

"What time?"

"About seven o'clock."

"But he's been back from there. He dropped that party here half an hour

ago, and picked up another passenger."

But a moment's thought brought to Van Voorst fresh inspiration. There was still one resource. Though Callahan might not return to Longacre Square, he must, sooner or later return to the garage where he kept his car. Anyone of these men could tell him where the garage was. Instantly he started to approach the most civil of the group. He would hire him to take—But even at the moment of action the dazzling gleam of twin acetylene lamps flashed across his path and a big, dark-colored car panted to a stand at his side. Glancing up he saw that it was empty, save for the chauffeur; and intuitively he knew that this was Callahan, even before he heard a raucous voice shouting:

"There's your man, mister!"

Van Voorst's questioning of Callahan was briefly pointed.

"You're the man who picked up a fare—a—a—" he stumbled over the word "gentleman," "in front of that restaurant half an hour ago, aren't you?"

Callahan said that he "had him right."

"Where did you take him?"

"To the Twenty-third Street ferry."

"What road?"

"The Pennsy."

"Did he buy a ticket?"

"I didn't wait to see, sir."

Then with a "take me there, and lose no time," Nicholas Van Voorst sprang into the seat at Callahan's side.

There was a quick release of the brakes, the throttle was thrown open, a lever was drawn back and pushed forward again, and the car wheeled swiftly out into Seventh Avenue and headed southward. In a moment the glare and glitter of the heart of the White Light district was left behind, and the straight, wide avenue, with its scattering street lamps and its double car tracks stretched ahead, sordid and dim and comparatively deserted.

It was a September night, bright with stars, and the air was crisp with the promise of Autumn. The breeze, stirred by their flight, whistled about their ears and tugged at Van Voorst's hat and overcoat, until for safety he grasped his hat brim and drew it down hard and

for comfort turned up his coat collar.

Impatiently he kept urging Callahan to greater speed. He knew that the up-town ferry boats ran less frequently after nightfall but he was not sure as to the times of departure. It was now five minutes after twelve. He fancied that the last boat left at 12:10, and he doubted that there had been any between that and 11:40.

As his active brain busied itself with possibilities the motor car with horn tooting swept into Twenty-third Street and began the last stage of its whirlwind race toward the river.

Every second now was doubly precious. If he missed the 12:10 boat he would lose all chance of overtaking Demorest. Luckily West Twenty-third Street after midnight is not a crowded thoroughfare and there were few obstructions to delay their mad on-rush. Once a police officer shouted a warning, but what with the roar of the hard-driven engine and the cry of the wind in their ears, they caught no sound of his voice.

Almost a block away Van Voorst sighted the hands on the illuminated clock in the ferry house tower and saw that already they marked ten minutes after twelve.

"If there's another pound of speed in this rattle-trap of yours let it out," he demanded of Callahan, but for blocks the motor had been doing its best.

A Twenty-third Street car taking the curve across the plaza that fronts the ferries halted directly in their path as they would have cut across the rails, and by an inch margin they missed disaster. Van Voorst's money was in his hand ready to make payment, and thrusting two bills at Callahan, he sprang from the car while it was still moving.

As he entered the ferry house a gong clanged and he knew that it was the signal of departure. If he was to make the boat, now, there was not an instant to spare. He dropped a quarter on the ledge of the ferry-ticket-seller's window and dashed by the window of the ticket-taker in frantic haste, speeding across the inner waiting room just in time to wedge himself through the already closing iron gate.

He had caught the last boat by an infinitesimal part of a second.

It was now his task to discover whether or not Demorest was aboard her. As yet he had made no plan as to his course of action on encountering him, but he knew that to attempt to gain possession of the pearls in so public a place as the saloon of a ferry boat would be simply to court failure. He decided, therefore, that in looking for his man he must be careful to remain unrecognized himself. It was fair to presume that Demorest, having had ample time to board the boat, had done so by way of the upper deck. Acting upon this presumption Van Voorst made only a cursory survey of those in the lower cabins. Then climbing the stairs he went directly to the deck, and leisurely circling it, scanned through the windows every occupant of the upper saloon.

Demorest was not one of them.

Again he made the round, but the person he sought was apparently not on the upper deck. He went below again and within the cabins and without he looked now, not cursorily but carefully, but without result. Finally he returned above and took up a position forward of the saloon, leaning against the boat's rail. He was disappointed, dismayed, almost discouraged. It seemed that he was to have only his trouble for his pains.

And then, for the first time since his chase began, he questioned whether the fellow he was following—or endeavoring to follow—had had the least intention of going to Jersey City. What, he asked himself, would be his object? If he wished to pawn the string of pearls he had taken from his wife, he could do it on the morrow in New York as well as anywhere else, and with less trouble. It was not as if he had taken them from a stranger. He could be very sure that Mabel would not set the police on his track or have the pawn offices warned.

And Callahan! It was quite possible that Callahan had not told the truth. Probably Demorest had paid him to keep silent as to the place to which he had really taken him. It should not have taken Callahan over thirty minutes to go from Longacre to the Twenty-third

Street ferry and back again. Yet he had been that long absent from his stand. And John had said that Demorest was in a "fierce hurry." He had been in a "fierce hurry" himself, and had made the foot of Twenty-third Street in less than nine minutes.

No; he should have made more certain that Callahan was telling the absolute truth. A ten-dollar bill would probably have brought out Demorest's true destination and a fund of circumstantial detail into the bargain. But he had foolishly accepted the chauffeur's first answers as fact and had become at once so engrossed in his effort to follow quickly that he had not even cross-questioned him.

It was a most humiliating condition of affairs, and he felt it keenly. Strangely enough he considered Jack Basilea now, more than he did Mabel Demorest. What would that lad think of him if he returned and confessed failure? To boast and then fail was a poor example to set a young Freshman. No excuse he could offer would wipe out the impression this fiasco would make. And Jack, he knew, had always been inclined to regard his youthful uncle as very much of a hero.

Again he pulled at his hat brim and drew his overcoat collar closer about his neck. The night was still before him and he had certainly not exhausted all the possibilities. He would return to New York, hunt up Callahan again and make an effort, at least, to get upon the right track.

As the boat ran smoothly into her slip he pressed his way forward with the crowd. The deck, which had been dark, was now dimly lighted by the reflection from the electric-lighted ferry house, and the heads and shoulders of passengers before him came out in sharp silhouette against this pale glow.

All at once he halted, surprised, delighted. The man directly in front of him was Demorest—unmistakably Demorest. Somehow, by some fateful accident, he had overlooked him in his careful survey of his fellow travelers.

Now Van Voorst's resilient spirits rose in sudden new-born exaltation. Success was already within the reach of his hand.

Unaccountable though his motive was, Demorest was leaving New York. Callahan had told the truth.

Permitting the pressing crowd to separate him in some slight degree from the man he sought, Van Voorst, kept him well in sight, following him off the boat and up the bridge to the train floor. It was evident now that Demorest had his plans for getting away well laid. Van Voorst had forgotten that this boat connected with what is known as the "Owl Train" for Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. But straight towards the gate which admitted passengers to this train Demorest strode, with his pursuer but a few paces behind.

Van Voorst saw him show his ticket to the gateman, who punched it, and then he saw him proceed. Van Voorst had no ticket, but he gave Philadelphia as his destination and was permitted to follow. For an instant this delayed him, but he ran a few steps to regain his lost ground, and so caught sight of Demorest again just as he was climbing aboard the Philadelphia sleeper.

Of the colored porter who stood at the car's step Van Voorst asked for a lower berth.

"Not a berth in de cah, sah, upper or lower," came the answer.

"All right, then. I'll sit up in the smoking room."

"No smokin' room in dis cah, sah."

"Then I'll sit up in the wash room. There *must* be a wash room, you know."

"Oh, yes sah," grinned the porter, "dah's a wash room, but dah's no seat in de wash room, sah."

Van Voorst thrust a five dollar bill into his palm.

"I think you'll find me a seat," he said.

"Yes, sah, cert'ny, sah. Now I come to think, sah, dah's a lower berth engaged from Newark, sah, dat dah's been some mistake about, sah!"

He referred to his chart and began actively to erase a lead-pencil memorandum therefrom.

"You can hab lower eight, sah."

Van Voorst found the interior of the car but a narrow gloomy aisle, flanked on either side by the curtained berths. Many of the curtains were drawn to-



It was a swift and graceful left-hand thrust

gether and from behind more than one of them came the muffled sound of heavy breathing. The car had been open since ten o'clock and a number of the passengers were already asleep.

Before three or four of the unoccupied berths men were standing in the first stages of disarray. One of these Van Voorst saw was Demorest. Taking note of the number of the berth nearest him, and counting down, he ascertained that Demorest was preparing to enter "lower 7," which was the berth directly opposite his own "lower 8."

Very promptly he decided that he had best allow this quarry to retire before approaching the quarters to which he

himself had been assigned. It was just as well, he concluded, not to run the risk of arousing the fellow's suspicions. Once he was in his berth it would be time enough to set about recovering from him his precious, but ill-gotten, possession.

And so, turning on his heel, Van Voorst made his way out to the car platform and lit a cigaret. But already the train was moving, and the porter was swinging himself aboard.

"Dah's a smoking room in de nex' car, sah!" he was informed, and there for the next ten minutes Nicholas Van Voorst ensconced himself and formulated his plans. He remembered now having taken this train on several occasions to Balti-

more and recalled that it had seemed to him then that it made stops at half-mile intervals. It was what is technically known as an "accommodation," and under the present circumstances the title would have an added significance, for he realized that after securing his prize a prompt and speedy escape would be imperative.

Busy as his thoughts were, the minutes dragged by. He was impatient now for action. He turned his face to the window and shielding his eyes with his hands to shut out the reflections of the lights within the car, saw that the train was still within the limits of Jersey City. He questioned, then, whether it would be safe to make his attempt until Newark was passed; but, presently his impatience, straining at the curb, prevailed and he returned to the Philadelphia sleeper.

Inside the door the obliging porter asked for his railroad fare and the price of his berth, and he paused for a moment to meet these demands. When he entered once more the long narrow aisle he found it deserted. From but one berth the curtains were drawn back and that was his own. The berth opposite presented a blank wall of green figured tapestry, behind which Demorest was probably already dozing.

With cool deliberation Van Voorst removed his hat, his overcoat and his dinner jacket and placed them on his berth's edge. When he should require them again it would be in haste and so they must be at hand.

He felt now that the train was crossing a draw-bridge and knew that Newark was but a few minutes distant, but to wait longer was to snap his tense nerves and leave him flaccid and uncertain. He was primed to the minute and further delay was hazardous.

All along he had revolted at the idea of taking Demorest at such a disadvantage. He believed in giving everyone a fair chance—he was not a sportsman who shot swimming deer—but the circumstances of this case he argued, were peculiar. Demorest had no claim to fair play. He had acted the part of a sneak thief, and whatever action Van Voorst chose to take was therefore justifiable.

Moreover, he could not afford to risk interference. To the world, not knowing the conditions, he must himself appear as a miscreant and he would have scant sympathy at its hands. Therefore his present plan was the only one that was in any wise practicable.

One hasty glance he took up and down the narrow aisle, and then, tearing apart the curtain of the opposite berth, plunged head first into the small enclosure.

It was empty.

Even as the tapestry hangings parted he felt that he had failed. A chill, sickening revulsion swept him. Mortified and dismayed he sprawled in the unoccupied berth; his fingers gripping the pillows, his knees torturing the mattress. But only for an instant the poignancy of disappointment bode. Though balked, he was not defeated. Demorest was still on the train, and the pearl necklace without doubt was in his possession.

With the realization Van Voorst's wits sharpened and his energies renewed. Out in the aisle of the car once more he spread wide the berth's curtains, and in the light thus gained began to rummage. He was quite sure he had made no mistake as to the location of the enemy's sleeping quarters. And yet there was a chance that after he had gone into the rear car Demorest had been shifted by the porter. Or—Ah! This was the explanation: Demorest had merely taken off his overcoat—there it was, now, lying folded at the back of the berth—and had sought the car forward for a smoke. Of course he could not have been fool enough to have left his valuable package. That was asking too much. Yet there was no harm in looking under the pillows, and thrusting a hand down under the bed clothes, or even under the mattress. All of which Mr. Nicholas Van Voorst promptly and with dexterity proceeded to do.

He was very quick and very thorough, for there was no time to lose. Possibly Demorest, like himself, meant to leave the train at Newark. He must be on the lookout for that. Already the brakes were grinding, and there was a perceptible though gradual diminution in the train's

speed. He stretched himself to the berth's far rear corner and plunged a hand into the crevice of the angle. Whereupon his fingers encountered something less yielding than either mattress or seat cushion. And then his hope began to preen itself once more. Unmistakably it was a box—a rectangular box, wrapped in paper. It was wedged in very tightly, however. He must needs take—

But at that moment a precipitate hand gripped his shoulder. The next he was standing with fists clenched, facing Demorest, flushed and irate, in the narrow sleeping-car aisle.

"I suppose you'll say you made a mistake," Demorest was saying, his voice shrill with wrath.

Van Voorst for a breath said nothing. His thoughts were intent on the box his fingers had just measured. There was small time for argument. What he had to say must be final. And he concluded that it were best his fists should do the speaking.

It was a very swift and graceful speech, and so managed, being a left hand thrust to the point of the jaw, that Demorest in falling landed a goodly part of his torso upon Van Voorst's berth, knocking that gentleman's hat into the aisle, and burying the carefully laid out dinner jacket and overcoat beneath his bulk.

As Demorest fell one way Van Voorst dropped the other. From the berth from

which he had so suddenly and recently emerged he now dragged mattress and bed clothes, thus freeing the precious box which had slipped down and got wedged in the corner. But already the whole car was wide awake and in a tumult. Men in

all stages of undress were crowding the aisle. The conductor and porter had appeared simultaneously from opposite directions. Those who were not asking questions were swearing at being aroused.

Van Voorst, unable in the confusion to find his dinner jacket, gathered up his hat and overcoat from amongst the disarray of bedding which strewed the floor, and hastily put them on.

"Porter," he said calmly, addressing that functionary, in spite of the uproar, "I'm not blaming you. You did your best for me. But I don't like the class of people you carry. I was never in such a Bedlam in my life. I'm going

to get off at Newark, and the gentleman who engaged lower berth eight, can have it and welcome."

With quiet insistence he elbowed his way to the door; and before the train had quite come to a stand, he dropped off the step, his hand still clutching the prize.

A minute or so later he crossed over to the east bound platform to take the Washington and New York Express, due at Newark at 12:23, but, as good fortune would have it, that morning half an hour



Nicholas Van Voorst stepped from a cab under the porte-cochère of the Waldorf-Astoria

late. And in his heart there was something akin to quiet exultation.

And then, under one of the platform lights, he took his first look at the little parcel that had so nearly eluded him. And with that first look his triumph died.

The wrapper bore the written address: "*Samuel Johnson, Porter, Pullman Car Company, Jersey City.*" And above it, in bold black printed letters: "SAMPLE SHINO SHOE POLISH."

A realization of the utter helplessness of his position, swept over him. Shame, reproach, abasement, all had their way with him. He had dared to pride himself on his cleverness, on his efficiency—he, the very prince of blunderers!

Absorbed in his self-condemnation, he boarded the train. When he reawoke to his surroundings he was on a ferry boat in mid-river, vainly endeavoring to force his hands into a pair of gloves a size too small for him. The situation of itself brought relief. For the moment his mind was diverted. He asked himself whether, by any chance, he could have exchanged gloves with some one. He examined the buttons. They bore his haberdasher's name. He questioned whether his brief resort to fisticuffs could have left him with swollen knuckles. But the assumption seemed untenable. The mystery of it interested him.

As the boat approached its New York slip Van Voorst rose from his seat in the cabin and sought the forward deck. There, pondering still upon the shrinkage of his gloves he thrust his hands into his overcoat pockets, only to meet a reminder of his humiliation. One hand encountered the parcel. Irritated by this evidence of his folly he resentfully drew it out and stepped towards the rail, intent upon tossing it overboard. But as his glance caught the wrapping, he paused.

It was not the same parcel. Holding it in the light from the cabin doors, he eagerly read the penned superscription. And then his heart sang again; for suddenly all was quite clear. He was wearing Demorest's overcoat. He had been trying to get his hands into Demorest's gloves. He was in possession of the pearl necklace; which all the while, had been playing tag with his left thigh.

At half-past one o'clock Nicholas Van Voorst stepped from a cab under the Thirty-fourth Street *porte-cochère* of the Waldorf-Astoria, and made his way to the hotel desk.

"I have here a parcel for Prince del Argo," he said to the night clerk, whom he knew. "Will you oblige me by having it delivered to the Prince with his morning coffee?"

The Weakest Link

BY REM. A. JOHNSTON

A MAN sat on the outer edge of the first landing with his feet dangling incontinently, his battered tin dinner-bucket gripped in his right hand and steadied against his knee, and his old coat hung over his left shoulder. His head rested against an iron baluster, his eyes were closed, and he was breathing regularly. Upon his face, in the reflected red of the dying day, the grime of ten hours' labor gritting into roughened skin showed plainly. And on his bared arms the veins ran red and heavy to bursting above over-developed muscles.

Taking him for what his appearance and surroundings suggested one would have said that he differed not a jot from ten thousand other toilers overcome with weariness and the moist, airless heat of a June evening.

Yet, there was that about his drooping lip, his thin nostrils, and rather high forehead which bespoke an heredity and a past related to things other than the squalid and miserable life that swept by him. There was a dolor in his half-despairing posture which spoke of longings never voiced; and there was a shadow of

contempt, habitual and frozen, about his jaws. The whole effect of posture and appearance suggested unsatisfied hope mingled with dogged determination to endure.

As he rested, crouching, before he should climb the four flights of stairs that brought him to his home, he sighed, his eyelids sagged, drowsiness fastened upon him. A street piano on a distant corner churned out ragged music; half-naked children bawled and fought in the gutter; brushing against his hanging toes the weary myriads tramped homeward—and the roar of life in the streets swelled up, fugue-like, mingling with his still misery, till it all became a minor to soothe him.

Now he was rocking through the country. Trees switched him in the face; briars scratched his bare legs. He was following again the willow-shaded creek up to the old swimming hole. Back in the Silver Valley the swimming hole was the greatest place in all the world for flinging off the sorrows of the heart and washing soul as well as body clean. Now, the kids were diving into cool, sweet water. A big elm made perfect shade, and the creek widened comfortably under it. On a branch, overhead, a breast-bright oriole had builded its swinging nest; far above a crow paused in the air to inspect, with raucous, inquisitive cawings, a distant cornfield, before it should flap indolently on.

He could hear the soft, insistent, chatter of innumerable birds, and once more feel the wine of life working eagerly in his heart. The small haunting pain reduced itself to a mere throbbing undercurrent. Now, they were ducking and splashing. The cool bubbles ran over his heated body. He had driven Jimmy Murphy to the bank, and now Jimmy had returned with reinforcements to punish him. Down, down he went to the bottom. He was among the roots of the elm; he was clutched by the slimy tentacles of the rank weeds at the bottom of the pool. Help! He struggled to loosen himself! Up! Up!

Some one of the ceaseless passing throng paused to jostle Baker awake.

And he sat up now, rubbing his eyes, and looking stupidly down at the man who had seized his swinging leg. It was a stranger—a countryman—and his face was ludicrously anxious. It was the sort of a face Baker had been dreaming about, and as he looked into it the stinging, rankling, longing, calling to him from his past mocked him, sweeping back over him in sickening waves.

"I guess I'm lost, mister," the stranger said, apologetically. "I be'n a-lookin' fer a p'liceman—but there don't seem to be nobody with brass buttons on in this God-neglected place. Kin you tell me—is this Harden street, North, mister? An' am I very fur from Center street dee-po?"

Baker, still looking down vacantly, thought he saw Silver Valley coming up to him in a dream. A crowd of memories overtook him. Then he shook sleep out of his eyes fearfully.

"It's Harden street, all right," he said at last, "but it's South Harden. You're about twelve miles away from your station. I guess you are lost.

The farmer smiled, wrinkles of consternation deepening about his eyes.

"Then this is a bad part o' town, aint it, mister? I'm kind o' worried. They said nobody was very safe on South Harden. Back home they talk bad o' this place. It's kind o'—kind o'—"

Baker smiled grimly at the crowd of workers flowing by.

"There's better places," he admitted. "But I never got no hurt. Where'd you come from?"

"I've lost my way—train due to leave in twenty minutes. I'm from Silver Valley, mister. Mebbe you've be'n through Silver Valley—it's th' pertiest place in th' world. My name's Jackson—Jim Jackson. I'm a infloential man in th' Valley."

Baker remembered him well. So this was Jim Jackson—old "Bullfinch" Jackson's second son. He was a man of Baker's own age. How time had built up its curious wall! They had hunted and fished and—and swum together. The lift of the man's eyes were natural—and the broad speech of Silver Valley was as sweet as sugar. Jim Jackson—well, well!

"You're a long ways from your station. I reckon you've been seein' the sights. Down on South Harden street, eh?"

"I be'n seein' all I could see—which aint much. I'm from Missou! There's a pile o' big houses where people live like rabbits in warrens, and a lot o' dirty chimneys coughin' up smoke. Lord, all th' dirt in th' world must come out o' them! I come in here on a excursion train. What's your name, mister?"

"Back in Silver Valley," Baker said slowly, "they used to call me Sam Baker. Hello, 'Stubtoe' Jackson—have you forgot 'Bunch?' I was a kid when I left home to come here to work. It sounds like a dream. I never expected to see any of you again."

He broke off and flung his dinner-pail back towards the door and shook his coat out over his lap.

"There—back there—my folks," he said shakily, "are all dead, I s'pose?"

"And you're — Bunch? By Judas priest! Why, you're the lad that—that—"

"Yes," said Baker grimly. "I'm the boy they said stole the parson's money—but I didn't."

"They found that out, Bunch—five years after you left," Jackson said gently. "It was Bones Jenson—old 'Jimpson Weed,' you mind, who stole it, and laid it onto you. He told when he was a-dyin'. After that they all tried hard t' find you, but never did—"

Baker looked back at his dinner-bucket lying in the doorway, then he slipped down from the landing, hurriedly.

"I reckon not," he said. "Let's walk down th' street, Stubtoe. It's be'n"—and his speech ran into the long lost dialect of home—"it's be'n twenty year sence I heerd from back there—an' I be'n *that* homesick I could 'a' died. They had made me out a thief an' a liar, an' I never was either. I couldn't stand it. Mother—she stuck up fer me—but mother—she's—"

"She's dead," said the other softly. "An' you're our old—Bunch? Lord! Lord!"

It was a strange evening to Baker—more like the fragment of a dream. Only—it was so real! Most men who are driven from home are less fortunate in

learning how it is that their only devil has been Fear. Baker could see now that he had spent twenty of the best years of his life away from surroundings most suitable to him and his needs. Driven from home when a mere youth by a suspicion which he felt had ruined him, he had plodded doggedly through a sordid existence, falling lower and lower in labor and ideals as necessity pinched him, stung hourly by a great longing to go back—a longing that was always working in his veins like fever, and which made him dread lest some day he would give way to it and desert his family. Now, as he learned from Jackson details of the past that he had never known—the saving of his honor so late—too late, maybe!—he felt the impulse coming over him again—the impulse to fly.

For a long space the two friends stood on the curb talking, jostled and pushed by the peevish crowd; then together they sought out a quiet little restaurant. It was growing dark, and even in the grimy, neglected streets into which they turned their steps, the lights were beginning to twinkle and gleam. Evil faces peered out at them from dark hallways. Baker's indifferent and accustomed attitude, however, was Stubtoe's protection. After a time they found food to eat, and the stream of talk continued to flow. Jackson had looked up his return train in a schedule, tattered and seamed, which he carried in his hand. It was still hours before he could hope to follow the excursion train which he had missed. Under the excitement of an unusual situation he became loquacious. His speech, mellowed, the "g's" dropped smoothly from his participles. Unconsciously Baker forsook the idiom of the slums and his tongue ran fluently among the forgotten colloquialisms of his past.

You have heard two old friends come together after a long separation. They begin to talk of times so far gone that one can scarcely remember the traditions. Step by step they descend to the present, squeezing the sweetness out of each morsel of humble history. One hears them speak lovingly of men who died before one was born, or of things that happened in one's early youth—misty, shadowy an-

nals on which one's town has been erected.

So Bunch and Stubtoe ran on evenly about Silver Valley. Baker had come west when he was twenty—he was forty now. Jackson told him how Silver Valley had grown from one hundred to three hundred souls, and Baker remembered; Jackson told how Silver Valley had increased from three hundred to six hundred—and to Baker the simple story was an Iliad and Odyssey. There was a great brick church on the corner where Bill Simms, the cripple, used to keep a grocery; and there was a bank, with a pressed brick front, on the town commons where the boys used to play townball. The school Bunch had attended—an old frame one—had been replaced years ago. And the creek, which had furnished the "swimming hole" had been "drudged" until it spent most of its summer dry. And through it all the old longing enveloped, clutching at his heart stronger than it ever had before. He did *so* want to go back—*alone*, as he had come!

And mother? She had died praying for him. She had always known her boy was true. Hadn't she "raised him square" and honest—didn't she know her own boy? Father had not shared with her at first in her belief. "'Peared as if any one who ran away must have been guilty—where there's so much smoke there's usually some fire." But father had lived long enough to see Sam vindicated—oh, yes; oh, yes.

It was a very wonderful evening, with Baker looking into his old friend's eyes and reading there the old hopes and old fears and old joys. What had he to do with these thousand streets and endless work-filled days? What part had he in the breakfast at dawn, the grinding smear of a factory-day that left him numb, the sorry supper, the tortured hours of the sleepless nights? Why had he married a woman of the tenements—a woman who could not understand his longing, who could not hear the call of the damp, furrowed land when spring came, and the robins were singing in the orchard? Why had he slipped from the sweet, clean life of the open places?

When they went into the streets at last

Baker found a park he knew. It was comfortably tiny, possessing three straggling trees, a dozen bushes, half-a-dozen rustic benches and a single arc-light. Baker drew his friend to one of the seats, and they sat there with the swaying silver of the lamp pouring over them.

It was then that Jackson began to tell the story of his homely success—how he had risen from country obscurity into country fame. The wealth of Silver Valley had contributed liberally to him. He had lived like a god—three country-cooked meals a day and all the sunshine and good air he needed. He had made some money—quite a little money. As he talked his breast swelled out. He hardly knew when he put his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest and said, "I own four farms."

And all the time Baker looked at Jackson with curious eyes. Stubtoe had not been a bright fellow. But somehow he had picked up the things you are measured by. Baker, narrowing on himself, saw how Fate back of everything had glorified Stubtoe while it had broken and tricked him—Bunch.

Presently they wandered out of the park and into the streets again. Baker, smiling grimly, began to show the Silver Valley man some of the things that are not marked down in the guide books. Something of the "color" of his own sordid life.

First they went into a little palm garden. There was music there, shuffling feet, glittering lights, and songs sung in high, thin voices. A steady overtone of bibulous babble floated heavily on the tainted air. It is safe to say that Jackson wished himself well out of the place.

Baker would drink now and then. He pushed Jackson out into the streets with an arm that was tense with the false strength of quick stimulation. Through streets and alleys they wandered. Sometimes they stopped at saloons where there were many disreputable looking men and strange, hollow-eyed women. Jackson felt that he was being suffocated and begged to be taken out into the air again.

So, grinning wickedly, Baker took his charge into pleasanter ways. The dazzle of skurrying cross-town cars and the

blinking and shifting of moving lights hypnotized the stranger. The eager thrill of new experience flashed hotly over the man's slow nerves arousing him to the first rapture of the inexperienced.

"I don't wonder you've stayed here for twenty years, Bunch," Jackson praised. "I'd stay here twenty years more if it was me. By Judas priest I would, Bunch! Let's have another drink."

Baker bit him off with a sobering jeer. What a fool this half-witted old friend of his was not to see through the flaring husk of things! Did he not know the ugly, aching heart beneath? Even a farmer should see this all as a brazen, bold blasphemy of life, where people laughed and drank deep to hide their helplessness and misery.

Suddenly Baker paused, then quickly dragged his old friend back through an alley and along a twisting maze of streets away from the light again. They came, after much walking to a little doorway which opened upon a very black corridor. Presently they found steps—steep, narrow stairs, and many landings. Each of the landings was guarded by a silent watcher. To each watcher Baker mumbled a phrase which was not intelligible to Jackson but which seemed sufficient to pass them along. On the final landing a door gave upon a tiny hall crowded with somber-faced working men. A miniature stage with its miniature lectern faced the eager but silent assembly. A black-browed man presently appeared to the accompaniment of low applause. He began to speak, slowly at first, then rapidly and angrily. And over the room a hush fell. Lowering brows, lit by angry, smouldering eyes, marked the eager visages of his listeners. The speaker flung his arms in all the contortions of red oratory.

"This is somethin' you've never heard before, Stubtoe!" Baker's face had sharpened. "An' it's true—true—true!"

"This aint hell, is it?" Jackson asked, fearfully.

The speaker on the platform paused suddenly. There was a slight scuffle at the door, followed by a single hissed word.

"P'lice!"

Then the lights went out. Hand in hand Baker and his friend pushed and pummeled their way out of the place through a side exit which opened into a corridor that wandered interminably through empty lofts before it ended in the back-room of a saloon.

At the very last they were standing on a corner, and Baker was pointing out the car which Jackson must take. He was giving him minute instructions as to the location of his station. Then they separated and Baker was returning to his tenement, his soul shaken and his feet unsteady. His mind was now filled with a single resolve. The hour of his freedom had come. He would forsake the city; he would go home, and *alone* as he had come. The thing was done in the tenements every day. Sarah could starve or do worse. She was not of his people. The long war was over at last. Jackson had said there was a bit of property waiting for him to claim. He would take no woman of the slums and her gutter children back into the clean country.

He was talking quietly to himself, his eyes quite frozen, when he reached at last, the top landing of his miserable tenement and twisted at the lock. His hands fumbled the key but finally the bolt gave, and the squalid, dimly lighted place yawned before him.

Tossed between hope and fear he still realized that there was no time to lose. He must dress and get away. He owned a single threadbare suit of black Clay worsted. Into this he would put himself, and then—to-morrow—why, to-morrow—

Through the slatternly kept kitchen he crept. It was dimly lighted by a badly smelling oil lamp. Into the sitting-room he passed. At the bedroom of his wife and boy he paused. How weary the sleepers seemed. He began to slip off his clothing as quietly as possible. From a nail behind the door he took down his "Sunday" suit. Into his pockets he transferred the things he would most need.

When he was dressed he stepped across the room, and in the light of the table lamp, shaded and dull, he looked at his sleeping wife. How coarse were her fea-

tures, seamed by hard work and wrinkled by the sapping tendencies of her life. Her hand was lying on the quilt. It was knotted and red with toil. One lock of her hair fell across a sallow cheek. She had not looked like this ten years ago when he had married her. As he turned from her he shuddered. What if she had been faithful to him according to the highest law of their surroundings! Was *he* really a part of all this? And does a man require no more than goodness and faithfulness? He smiled bitterly. Then he glided over to their son's bed, and bent down to see that face. The two lips were parted as if to get all the good air possible, but they were wreathed and beautiful. It was a Silver Valley face—but no matter. To-morrow would bring him many such faces.

Now, he turned, with finality, to the stairway, down which he crept stealthily and out into the night. In his pocket he carried the money he had that day drawn

Bunch Baker was going back at last—back home to his inheritance. He was only forty—only forty! He had a whole life before him after all.

As he reached the lower landing he stretched himself before he should swing off to a car. How very sleepy he was in spite of the excitement. How sleepy—and how—different—different things seemed to be—just now. Why, even as he paused to stretch and wake a harsh jangle broke in upon his ears. It was the splutter of the street-piano, the shouts of the gutter children, and the deadly tramp of the home-going, work-ridden, supper-anxious multitude. And the minor wail of that endless fugue wore down upon him through the waves of sleep, mingling with the heavy music of familiar twilight. In the pause that lies world-deep on the city of a June evening his startled vision caught the ceaseless panorama he had been looking out upon hours or seconds ago, and marked the smoke in the sky drifting straight to heaven like the needle of a compass hunting the pole-star, and above it a sliver of steam, white as snow, shooting upward like the finger of an angel pointing to the House of God. And over all the ranks of uneven

walls, further than the sight would go, the birds rested in the hazy air.

Some one was dragging at his tightly held dinner-bucket, and pulling him away from the cast iron baluster.

"Dad—youse been 'sleep here. I hoid youse snorin'. It's supper-time."

So he shook himself awake and went upstairs lifelessly to the fragrance of frying onions and potatoes and liver.

"I fell asleep, Sarah—jist b'low," he said apologetically.

The woman smiled indulgently—she knew he never drank, and that he worked very hard.

"There's two letters here fer youse, Sammy," she said.

"I fell asleep—I been dreamin', Sarah. A funny dream—of things I'd about forgot. I can't mind more 'n' half o' it—"

His wife paused in her work, and passed out the letters. One was long and flat, with a return card on it; the other was thin and square, and the address thereon was written in the tremulous hand of age. The postmarks were quite indistinct.

Baker took the mail with a startled gasp and walked to the window that looked out upon a thousand roofs. His fingers trembled as he tore clumsily at the ends of his letters. Then he began to read very slowly.

When he turned back to her his face showed white, even under the grime.

"It's from home, Sarah," he cried breathlessly. "They found out I didn't do it—found out years ago that I never took th' money, an' they be'n huntin' me ever sence. Father's dead—an' mother's alone with th' farm. Don't you see? They're askin' me to come back—an' there's some money, Sarah—some money—quite a bit of money."

"I don't know's I ever been on a real farm," the woman answered with a sigh. "This here has always been home. But I knowed youse been achin' an' pinin', Sammy."

Then she smiled, rather wonderfully, and her face became quite tender.

"Youse git cleaned up," she commanded brightly, "an' eat your supper. Any place that looks good t' youse, Sammy, looks good t' Babe an' me!"



"And you ask me if I'm happy"

In Nora's Absence

BY ROBERT ADGER BOWEN

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

PRETTY little Mrs. John Trevillian, at the abrupt sound of the electric bell, dropped the dust-cloth from her hand and sat down on the nearest chair, breathing steadily, a look of stubborn despair upon her face. She wouldn't—she couldn't—answer that bell! Of all days for anyone to wish to see her, when Nora, combined nursemaid and housemaid in one, had left her that week without an hour's notice, when the whole tiny apartment was topsy-turvy, the baby calling for attention, she herself looking a fright after her unusual labors in the way of setting to rights after a most unneces-

sary but praiseworthy attempt at housecleaning. That was the worst, she told herself, of living on the ground floor: people would insist upon ringing your bell themselves.

Whoever it was at the door was persistent: the ringing continued. Elinor Trevillian set her teeth and waited. She wished the baby would cease its clamor. She knew it would be heard and, therefore, the fact be known that somebody was at home. And then her conscience began to assail her. It might be a telegram, or a message from John—he knew how she abominated being rung up on

the telephone. And, oh! blessed thought, it might be Nora returned sooner than she had expected from her grandmother's deathbed! She would risk it.

Giving herself a few hurried pats before the mirror and pausing a moment to darken the rooms, she ran down the hallway and opened the door. She uttered a relieved little cry at sight of the tall, stylishly dressed girl who confronted her.

"What in the world is the matter, Nell? Hadn't it been for the lusty howling of that precious young one of yours I'd have thought you gone, bag and baggage. What a sight you are!"

"I'm house cleaning, Katherine. Nora's grandmother—the other one—is thinking about dying, and when she does conclude to go, a long wake will be in order. I'll be doing my own work for a time. I came very near not letting you in."

"So I perceived. Can I help any?"

Elinor laughed.

The idea of Katherine Fortescue doing housework was ludicrous.

The girl turned suddenly.

"Why do you laugh?" she asked, almost sharply. "Do you, too, think I am so worthless that the mere idea of my being of use convulses you?"

"There are many uses for a beautiful woman, dear, other than being a chambermaid."

"Oh! rubbish," said Katherine. "You are beautiful yourself."

"But I am a wife and a mother in a servantless flat," laughed Elinor. "Needs must when the Devil drives!"

The girl, with arms uplifted, removing her costly hat, asked abruptly:

"You are happy?"

"As the day is long. What is it, dear?"

Katherine shrugged her handsome shoulders.

"With me? Oh! nothing—everything. I'm glad you've got something for me to do. What's the baby crying for?"

"Air and sunshine—and Nora," said his mother. "He isn't really crying—he's coaxing."

She left the room suddenly, returning the next moment with a cherub of a man child, eyes cerulean, laughter bubbling, arms and legs eloquent.

"And you ask me if I'm happy," murmured Elinor, her soft face against her boy's. "Hold him a moment, and guess again!"

Katherine held out willing arms, her eyes suffused with quick tears. She was the kind of woman whose mother-love lay so warm against her heart that the fondling of a baby always sent waves of emotion through her.

"Nell," she said now, her dark head bent so that only the baby could see her pain-filled eyes, and he, absorbed with the jewels about her neck, unmindful of them, "we have quarreled again—finally, this time. He told me he dared not risk his happiness in my hands—his happiness—and his children's!"

"Katherine!"

"Oh! I deserved it. That's why it hurts so. Otherwise—what sort of wife and mother would I make, raised as I've been raised—spoiled, pampered, a hot-house product!"

"Oh! fiddlesticks," cried Elinor. "Just see how my baby loves you! And *he* cares, too, dear, or he would never have said such a cruel, unjust, untrue thing."

Katherine smiled.

"Are those attributes of caring, Nell? No, I do not believe his heart is broken. Anyway, he's gone, and I gave him back his ring, and have sent back all his letters in the good, approved, conventional way, and I wish I could forget, forget it all."

She put the baby down quickly upon the cushions and went over to the window, her back turned square to the little room.

"You know, dear," said Elinor, "I never did think him half worthy of you."

Katherine made no answer, and Elinor wondered. All at once the girl turned from the window.

"Go on with your work," she said. "I'll mind the baby. I'll take him out for a while. May I dress him?"

"Yes," said Elinor. "That'll be lovely of you! You know where his things are."

Left alone, Mrs. Trevillian set about her interrupted dusting. She was troubled. Great wealth had been Katherine Fortescue's life-long enemy, hampering in countless ways the many admirable traits of her mind and soul. How admir-

able these were none knew better than Elinor herself, whose long friendship, born at a distant boarding-school, was one thing which Katherine's riches had never served to lessen or disturb, despite the widely differing circumstances of their lives. Perhaps it was because of them that each cherished the other's affection, and Elinor had no more welcome visitor to the unassuming little apartment where her young husband had taken her than the stately girl who came there when she shunned the homes where her wealth and social standing and many graces made her among the most to be desired.

That the course of her love for the young lawyer, whose independent personality was forging for himself so enviable a place among the successful men of the great city, had been attended by many disasters, Elinor also knew. Cuthbert Strong was not the man to make a forbearing lover, and Katherine had never found it easy to bend her will to his. Elinor was not by any means sure that the rupture of their engagement was a thing to be distressed about.

She turned at the sound of a step and voice behind her.

"Will I do, ma'am?"

"Katherine!" cried Elinor. "What crazy thing is this?"

For, in the doorway, stood Miss Fortescue dressed in a neat black gown of the absent Nora, a nurse's cap upon her dark hair, a nurse's apron upon the front of her dress. A more beautiful Nora it would have been hard to find.

"I'm after takin' the baby out for his airin', Miss Trevillian," Katherine said, smiling. "Have you any commands?"

"Commands is good," laughed Elinor. "I fancy Nora asking that. Do you really mean to go out *that* way, Katherine?"

"Don't I, though?" Her lips quivered. "Perhaps, if I'm not fit to be a wife or mother, I may be a nurse—who knows?"

Elinor impulsively kissed her friend.

"Don't bother your beautiful head about him, dear," she counseled. "He isn't worth it."

She watched the new nurse depart with the baby in his perambulator not without some misgiving, and yet with a vague

feeling that the thing meant well for Katherine.

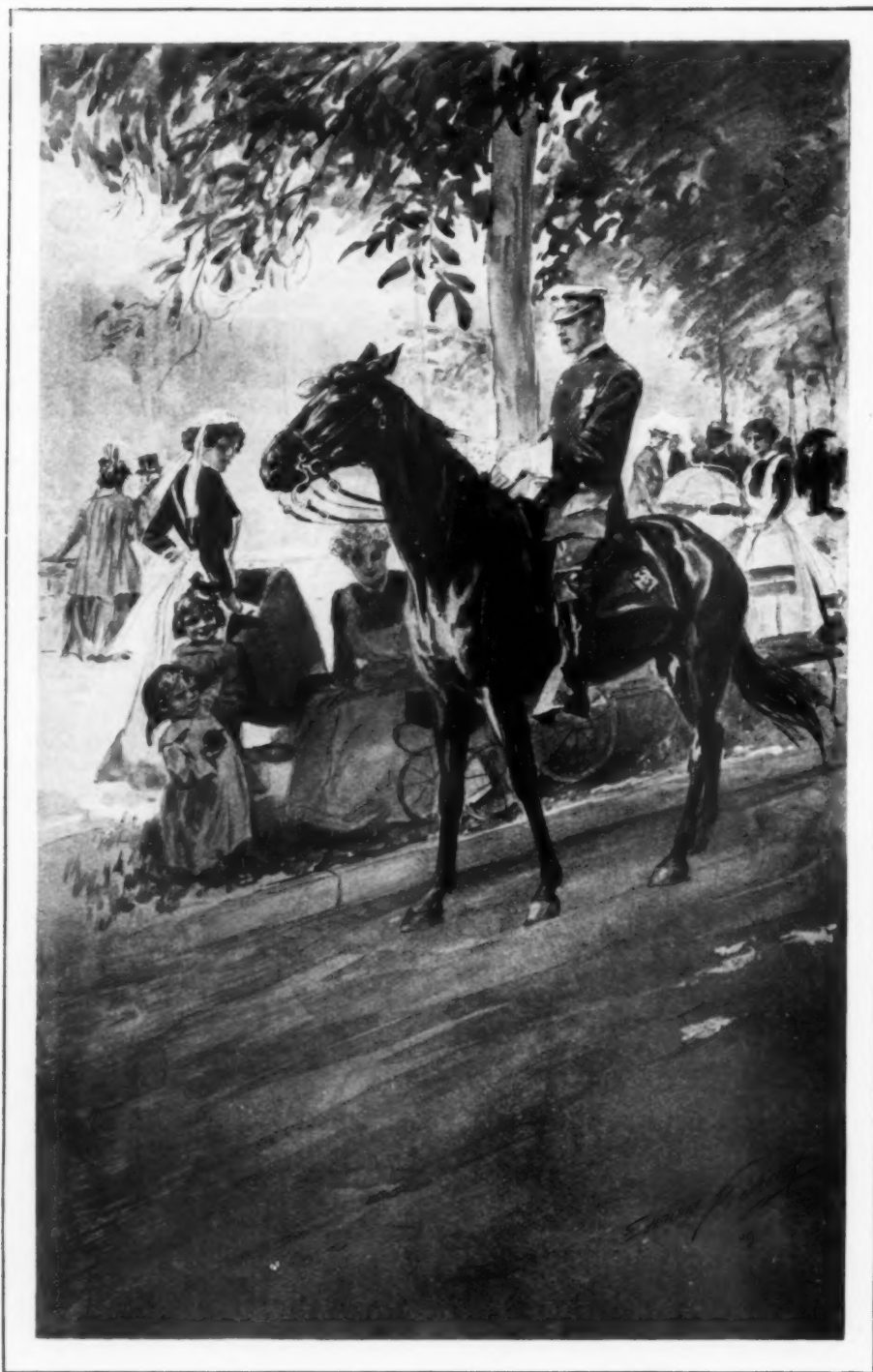
Katherine rolled the baby-carriage down to Riverside Drive, and crossing over the walk, found herself among many nurses out with their charges; young mothers who sat together on benches comparing notes while their children romped and played about them; young lovers, here and there, who, heedless of those around, lived for each other and the fruitful moment alone. Everyone seemed to belong to someone else, for even the nurses were friends. Katherine alone knew no one, moved along unrecognized, ungreeted.

It was absurd, she told herself, and yet it all made her horribly lonesome. Her lover's bitter words, wrung from him in greater stress of pain and disappointment than she realized, recurred to her momentarily. All these people about her were fulfilling their lives, humble lives most of them, perhaps, but useful, purposeful lives. She was not even a *bona fide* nurse. That her logic was illogical did not make Katherine's half-hour any less bad.

She moved on hurriedly, unconscious of the attention she was attracting from mothers and nurses alike—wondering and somewhat caustic attention much of it was.

"Such ridiculous airs," said one young matron to another, pausing long enough in her recital of yesterday's shopping-trip to turn and follow Katherine's Juno-like walk with disapproving eyes. "I wonder if she is hurrying home to have lunch with the husband while her mistress is down-town doing her week's buying! What *are* we coming to with our help!"

Katherine paused not in her quick walk until she had reached that part of the beautiful Drive where it widens out opposite the ponderous mausoleum; there she turned aside, and pushing between some unoccupied benches went out upon the grass beyond. Below her the majestic Hudson rolled, gold-washed in the warm sun, its lordly vista paling into the tenderest grays and violets. On the sparkling waters danced the pleasure craft—canoes with gleaming sails, au-



Sitting his horse with the grace of a born rider

dacious little launches, trim miniature yachts—the playthings of millionaires. In one of the largest and most imposing, a veritable ocean-going steamer it was, she recognized, with a curious sense of personal detachment, the *Victory*, her father's yacht, from whose cruise she had that day excused herself imperiously. In a spirit of sudden bravado Katherine waved her apron at it, and then the baby claimed her attention.

She had planted his cushion upon the warm ground and him upon it, but he never for a moment contemplated remaining ensconced thereupon. Katherine reached out after him, but he evaded her, laughing gleefully. It was something of a romp they were having, when suddenly the girl became aware that an unknown voice was addressing her.

"You will have to come off that grass," it was saying, rather reluctantly, so it seemed to Katherine. "I'm sorry, but it's against the rules."

Katherine sat up, adjusting her nurse's cap which had become disarranged in her play with the child. Before her, a few yards off, stood a young policeman of the traffic squad. Despite his good looks, his good manners, and his good intentions, Katherine felt an unreasoning vexation.

"Did you feel that you had to take all that trouble to enforce the law against one woman and a baby?" she asked, coldly. "What earthly harm are we doing here?"

The officer of the law hesitated.

"I'm sure I don't know that you are doing any—except just breaking the law."

Katherine looked up quickly, a keen scrutiny in her fine eyes. Clearly this young officer had a weapon more subtle than his club with which to carry his point.

"Shouldn't you, then, to be fulfilling your duty, arrest me?" she asked, curiously.

He smiled.

"Not until my discretionary powers of persuasion have failed," he said.

Katherine gazed at him. Then, suddenly, she remembered her own position. Before, however, she had time to think

out her next move, a scream from the child froze her with terror.

Unnoticed of either he had crawled behind Katherine, and, glorying in his escape, made for the edge of the terrace upon which they were, and there losing his precarious balance, rolled down the steep declivity until brought up against a tree. In a flash Katherine was upon her feet, but she might have fallen herself in attempting to scale the bank had not the young officer dashed by her, with a peremptory command to her to remain where she was, and running easily down the incline, picked up the child, and returned with it in his arms. His eyes met the girl's with something like a gleam of triumph in them, but he said nothing.

"You are right, officer," said Katherine, quick to understand the glance and the restraint of the silence no less, "there was harm in being here. And yet," she met his eyes squarely as she let him put the child in her arms, "the danger came only with you. And did you really have any authority to leave your horse and follow me in here?"

"Perhaps not," he returned, gravely. "The fact is, I saw you come here, and I preferred doing what I have done to leaving it to another. You are going now?" he asked.

"Yes. And thank you very much. I shall not forget."

Suddenly she blushed crimson. What sort of a nursemaid must this singularly possessed young man think her! She turned from him to the child with an abruptness which betokened her embarrassment, and when, an instant later, she raised her face, he had gone.

Katherine clambered back to the perambulator, put the child in, and retraced her steps homeward.

"Nell," she said, when a little later she was leaving the Trevillian flat, "I am coming here every day at eleven to play nurse to the baby, do you hear! I'll supply my own costume and give you my services free. I've had a most interesting morning."

And kissing her friend, she ran quickly down the stairs to the street.

From time immemorial the donning of a disguise has inspired a spurious courage and a strange assumption of qualities not possessed out of all proportion to the ephemeral nature of the cause. So it was now with Katherine Fortescue. A delightful sense of freedom came to her, not untouched with a spice of daring, characterized also by the knowledge that she was being useful, and permeated throughout by the flavor of her curious adventure with the young officer, an adventure which had piqued Katherine's interest more strongly than she might have been willing to admit, but which in the person of a nursemaid she hoped might repeat itself. For, surely, never had an officer of the law—she would not (even to herself as Nora) call him by his plainer designation—talked as this man had talked, acted as he had acted. Yet, though she saw him every day sitting his beautiful horse with the inimitable grace of the born rider, never by so much as a glance in his direction did she tempt from him sign of recognition or win from him a hint of abandonment of his statuesque repose. Nevertheless, subtly she knew that he was aware of her being there, one in the moving line of nurses and mothers, and those who came to that lovely spot on the Drive and paused there for the charms it held.

Then one day she met him face to face as he walked along the edge of the sidewalk, his docile horse following him in the road, to which the child in its perambulator held out its arms with little screams of delight. The horse stopped, neck outstretched and small head turned toward the beckoning arms. Katherine inclined her head, surprised at the quick beating of her heart, while the man gravely saluted, pausing to wait for the animal.

But the horse showed no desire just then of foregoing a closer investigation of what the perambulator held, and submitted incidentally to ecstatic pats and dabs of the boy's baby hands upon his soft, inquisitive nose. Again Katherine's eyes were lifted to the young officer's beside her, and this time they both smiled. It was an unusually winning

smile that he had, the smile of a boy carried over into manhood, and it disclosed even white teeth that gleamed the whiter in contrast to the healthy tan of his face.

"I fear this is a gross breach of discipline again," said Katherine, and just why she should have spoken with that subtly implied acknowledgment of equality between them did not occur to her then.

"At least, this time, we sin only vicariously," he replied, wondering what kind of mistress it was who employed this kind of nurse, "and I am sure I haven't it in my heart to blame the real offenders. Have you?"

He nodded, smiling, toward the horse and the child, but Katherine, watching him with increasing surprise, was slow to answer. The pointedness of his question, its personal quality, seemed, as with a flash, to give a long perspective to their slight relations.

"No," she said, after a time, when his return gaze had suddenly become embarrassing, "I think it would scarcely be fair if we did." She smiled with quick appreciation. "Besides, they have finished with each other."

She made as if to pass on, bending over the boy for an instant to adjust him more comfortably after his excitement.

"Need you hurry on? If you knew what a Godsend it was to have someone to talk with!"

He had hesitated over the "someone," not daring to say the *you* he meant.

"You know there isn't a nurse on the Drive who wouldn't envy me for the honor you are doing me," she said, a gleam of amusement in her eyes.

"Now you're laughing at me! And you know there isn't another nurse on the Drive, or anywhere else, for that matter—the sort of nurse you are."

Startled at that, she forgot to be offended. Her eyes met his searching for hers, and the glow of admiration in them was not lost upon her.

"Never mind my qualifications for my position," she said, pertly enough, she thought, for any nursemaid. "I'm sure you ought to be on your horse out there with an eye to the speed limit of some of



The horse submitted to ecstatic pats and dabs

those automobiles? Just look at that one!"

She pointed to a big open car filled with a party of men and women, which at that instant whizzed by, vicious in its total disregard of the rights and safety of others; and, as she looked, Katherine uttered a muffled little scream and instinctively seized the arm of her companion as he stepped by her quickly to reach his horse. He stopped as if galvanized at the touch, though through his veins his blood leaped madly. The next moment Katherine had turned from her rapt gaze at the speeding car in which, for a flash, her eyes had met squarely those of the man who had recently been her affianced lover.

Suddenly her face flamed with unreasoning anger. She wheeled upon the man beside her. Even in that moment of chaotic emotions she was aware of his remarkably handsome person, and the fact, curiously enough, added to her anger.

"Why can't you be about your business?" she cried, scorning herself as she did so for the innately feminine cruelty of her mood. She saw him stiffen, and his shoulders go back, the gray of his eyes turn purple. Before she could think, he had saluted her punctiliously, standing immovable beside his horse, and she it was, who, with lips drawn tight between her sharp, small teeth, moved past him down the Drive, shame, anger, admiration—even more—blinding her to the light of the full day about her.

Half an hour later Katherine burst in upon Elinor Trevillian (busy making a meringue glacé) with one part of her story—the lesser part she had already come to recognize it as being—but it served her as an escape valve for the greater emotions which she had to conceal in her own breast. Never would she mention to living soul her two meetings with the young officer; never would she go where she might meet him again. The episode was forever done with, and yet—she once more descanted feelingly upon the misfortune of having seen Cuthbert Strong, rather of his having seen her, in her masquerade.

At length Elinor checked her.

"If you only would give me a chance

to speak, dear," she said, "I would like to ask you what earthly difference it makes? If anything, I should be glad he had seen me."

"You don't understand," returned Katherine, truthfully enough. "It will be just like his exaggerated sense of conscience to go to father and make a horrid mess. I am almost afraid to go home for dinner."

She laughed. Even to her present perturbed mentality the idea of the self-willed Katherine Fortescue afraid of the consequences of her own acts was rather humorous.

Elinor spoke positively.

"You are not going home for dinner. You have to stay here and help me be nice to a friend John is bringing up."

"I'm in a nice mood to be nice. Who is it?"

"Richmond Feverell. He is an F. F. V., and as proud as Lucifer, John says, but the truest friend John has. I've never met him, for when John became engaged to me Richmond Feverell went to the Philippines to express his disapproval—not of me, but of John's marrying anybody. Since then, and before then, he has done everything and been everywhere, from Cape Town to Sitka. The funny thing about him is that, though he has money, he is always doing some erratic thing to fill in his time and add to his experience, serving before the mast, or fighting in the ranks, or something. He was the chauffeur once for some millionaire prince in Paris, but fled ignominiously when the princess fell in love with him. Of course he is splendidly handsome."

"Of course," laughed Katherine. "I was waiting for that."

"It seems John has just heard he is in New York. He didn't want to meet me, you see, and so kept out of John's way."

"But now," said Katherine, somewhat absently, "he wants a new experience, and is going to meet you! Is that it? And eat that meringue glacé!"

"Meringue glacé is made to be eaten," Elinor assented. "You will stay, dear? Telephone home for a gown."

"I've no patience with freaks, Neil, but all right, if it will comfort you."

And so it was that when evening came, and Katherine, lovely in a gown of severe black, with some splendid pearls gleaming upon the whiteness of her neck and arms, entered the little parlor where the men were, it was to find herself face to face with none other than the man whom she had twice talked with already as a policeman of the mounted traffic squad. Mistress of herself though she was, the surprise overpowered her and she stood abruptly still.

Feverell himself, handsomer than ever in the crucial test of irreproachable evening-dress, rose to his feet amazed, but quick to appreciate the delicacy of the situation, turned to Trevillian for his introduction.

In that brief interval Katherine had opportunity to collect herself enough to acknowledge the presentation formally.

Her first words were to Trevillian, a mere: "Good-evening, John."

And then, to her dismay, she saw that Trevillian intended leaving the room, and that she would be alone with Feverell. Her brows contracted at the tightening of the withes, and then she lifted her head proudly. Perhaps it were better so! She answered Trevillian's light pleasantries easily enough, then, as he left the room, turned to Feverell, whose eloquent eyes had never left her face for an instant since she had appeared before him.

"Sit down, Mr. Feverell," Katherine said, finding a chair herself. "I have been hearing something about your friendship for Mr. Trevillian from his wife."

So she wished no recognition of those other meetings! Remembering how disastrously the last one had ended Feverell was not sure he regretted this. If they were to start their acquaintance afresh it would be only fair to carry over any penalties for former transgressions.

"Yes," he replied, with a very boyish laugh, "I had always begrudged John to Mrs. Trevillian until I met her to-night for the first time, but now I see it had to be. The Gods had willed it!"

"Wont you tell me something of your friendship with Mr. Trevillian?" she asked.

"Some time," he replied, "I will tell you."

She flushed, not wholly with pleasure. It was clear that, although he might follow her lead so far as actual reference to their former meetings was concerned, she could make him feel that those meetings gave no background for their present and future relations. That he evidently cherished no ill humor against her for her rudeness to him of that morning, filled her with a most uncomfortable sense of humiliation. In spite of her resolution, she was about to speak of this when, at the moment, Elinor and her husband entering, Feverell rose to his feet.

"What a serious parley," laughed their hostess, "for two people who have never seen each other before."

It was not the only time during that evening that Katherine had to remember what she was fast coming to call to herself her guilty past, for, over their soup, Trevillian, choosing a moment of general silence, said abruptly:

"Did you take the kid out again this morning, Katherine?"

Of all the objects before her at which she might have looked, it was into Feverell's eyes that Katherine flashed her own as she raised them hastily.

"Yes, John," she answered, meekly.

"Not wearying in well-doing? What do you think, Richmond, of Miss Fortescue playing nurse every day to that spoiled youngster of mine? And, by gracious, you haven't seen him yet! Nell—"

"Eat your soup," laughed Elinor. "The baby'll keep."

Feverell, his eyes dancing, looked from one to the other. Even Katherine was smiling, awkward as it all had been for her.

And again, when they were eating their grape fruit salad, Trevillian sprang another bomb.

"What are you doing with yourself just now, Richmond?" he asked. "You know, Katherine, or you *don't* know, that he is the greatest fellow for finding crazy jobs for himself and taking the bread out of the mouths of the honest poor you ever heard of. I'd not be surprised to find him a starter in the Subway or head-waiter at Delmonico's. Just what *are* you doing?"

"Preserving the peace," laughed Feverell, thoroughly enjoying the situation,



She wished no recognition of those other meetings

"but I am not going to tell you any more for the present. It's a secret."

His glance swept Katherine's averted face.

Trevillian looked at his friend gravely.

"Now, what's that mean?" he queried, "'preserving the peace!' For goodness' sake, man, you haven't enlisted again in the army or navy—or become an undertaker?"

"A policeman, perhaps," suggested Elinor. "You're abominable, John—but Mr. Feverell says it's a secret, dear."

"He always does until I find it out," returned Trevillian, unabashed.

"Mr. Feverell," said Katherine a few hours later, as the great limousine car swung down the hill and on to the moonlit splendor of the Drive, "I accepted your polite offer to see me home, not be-

cause I stood in need of your escort in my own car, but that I might apologize to you for my rudeness to you this morning."

"Ah!" he said, and his exclamation was full of satisfaction. "We are to recognize, then, our disguises?"

She nodded.

"After that unfortunate dinner what else is there to do?"

"I could bless that dinner. Miss Fortescue," he went on, with quick change of feeling, "your rebuke to me this morning was, in a way, deserved, and what of it wasn't deserved was appreciated"—she saw him smile as the bright light of an arc-lamp flashed into the car—"for I need hardly assure you

that your cap and apron never deceived me as to the nature of woman you were, once you spoke to me."

"And I knew you were no policeman," she retorted, impetuously. "That is, I thought you were a very peculiar one—I mean—"

"I know exactly what you mean," he assured her gently. "We were both very bad actors. But there comes a time, Miss Fortescue, when acting is out of the question."

He turned from her suddenly, looking out to the molten river with its necklace of lights strung along the farther banks.

"At least, that time came for me the moment I saw you face to face, and heard the sound of your voice."

He could hear the quick breath she took, and was aware that she sat very erect and still, but those tributes to his

words he let her pay. He went on speaking to her, his face turned slightly from her, his eyes watching, unseeing, the lights flash by as the car bowled along.

"You asked me to tell you something of my friendship for Trevillian, and I said some time I would tell *you*. There is, perhaps, no other to whom I would speak it, for it has been the greatest friendship of my life, born of great suffering. Of that I may not speak, even to you to-night. But he will tell you there has never been a woman in my life until now."

He confronted her quickly, his face transfigured by the emotion which was shaking him.

"Do you know why I tell you this to-night?"

She essayed to speak, but a fear, primitive in its instinct, held her mute, her lips parted, her eyes, wide and luminous, fixed on his.

"I love you," he said, simply, though he was trembling in every muscle. "From that first day when I stood beside you, unseen by you, and watched you bending over that baby I knew that you were the woman—that if you would love me my life would become as other men's once more. Can you? Will you?"

Again she strove to speak, but the words she would have said stuck in her throat, and with a quick sob she turned from him, the hot tears springing to her eyes.

In an instant Feverell was smitten with contrition.

"I have hurt you," he cried. "I have loved you so much that I forgot you might feel you scarcely knew me."

Katherine stopped him with a little gesture. Her face was still averted, but she spoke bravely.

"You have not hurt me, but you have humbled me."

"And I would only honor you!"

"Ah!" she cried, "but that is just it. You do not know me. I am not at all what you think."

"What are you?"

She looked at him unflinchingly.

"Shall I tell you the last estimate made of me?"

And as he nodded, she went on:

"One who had had better means of judging me than you have had decided that I was spoiled and selfish and pampered, unfit to be a wife—and—and a mother."

"Ah!" He drew a deep breath. "The Fox and the Sour Grapes! Thank God! And what did you do then?"

Katherine started. Her face had flushed crimson.

"I put on Nora's apron and cap, and took Elinor Trevillian's baby on the forbidden grass."

"And thank God for *that*! And then?"

She hung fire at that. The great car was now where the Drive lay darkest and sweetest, the houses far to the left, the river tangled among the tops of the trees that grew between it and where they drove. Feverell leaned closer to the girl, his pulses throbbing.

"And then?" he asked again, hoarsely.

"And then—I put on Nora's apron and cap again and again, and yet again, and I went where I had gone that first day—just as any Nora might have done—and for the same reason."

"And then?" The words were almost inaudible.

"To-day!" she whispered.

"And to-night—and to-morrow—and the blessed days to come. Is it not so, my beloved?"

She made him no answer in words, but that was his own fault, and though her lips were sealed, that, too, he could not blame her for, but rather blessed.

"And, dearest," she said, after some minutes had gone by and they were talking connectedly again, "until the real Nora comes back and you can resign your commission, let us still be Darby and Joan, for I am so immoderately proud of you before all those nursemaids on the Drive!"

"Ah!" he cried, with a happy laugh, "I wonder if, after all, it was my uniform!"

The Higher Duty

BY I. A. R. WYLIE

Author of "The Barrier," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMANN WALL

AMIDST the roll of drums and blare of trumpets the Regiment of the Tenth Foot filed past the little isolated bungalow, the dust rising up behind the last company in great drift-clouds. As the mid-day sun beat down upon the fixed bayonets, it seemed to Enid Sandys, as she stood watching the pageant from the veranda, that she was gazing after a moving vapor lit up with a hundred glittering points of light. Then the confusion and tramp of marching feet faded presently; the dusk sank lazily upon the trees and withered flowers; the surrounding waste of open country resumed its normal dreamy aspect, and with its passing all vestige of life seemed to die away with the gay pageant, leaving behind a breathless, stifling silence.

Enid sank back into her lounge chair.

The one episode of the day, as far as she was concerned, was over. Just once every twenty-four hours her blood stirred out of its torpor, her pulses quickened—just a few minutes whilst her Regiment marched on its way back to the barracks. She called it her Regiment, and no one on the Station would have ventured to question her right to do so. She had once been a Farnel, and that family and the Tenth Foot were so associated together that it was not possible to imagine the one without the other. A Farnel had commanded the Regiment during the Peninsular war, and from that time onward, in ranks varying from private to colonel, a Farnel had never ceased to serve under the old colors. Even the daughters, obeying an unwritten law, had married into the Tenth or not married at all—until Enid came. She was the first to strike out on a new line.

One day a curious, awkward mannered

individual, who called himself a doctor, came and settled himself on the outskirts of the Station—why, no one knew. He muddled about among the natives, attended to their ailments in a desultory, amateurish way, which excited general derision. And people were further contemptuously amused when he began to make love to Enid Farnel. There was nothing very surprising about it—a lot of men before him had done the same. But when Enid actually became his wife, the astonishment and disgust of the whole Farnel clique were truly pitiful to behold.

"She will repent it," they said, as a sort of consolation to their wounded feelings.

If Enid did repent she never admitted it, but every day she came and stood on the rickety veranda and gazed after the magic circle she had quitted with eyes that were not exactly those of a very happy woman.

On this particular afternoon she was not left long to indulge in her reflections. She heard a quiet step, and looking up found her husband standing at her side.

"The Regiment has just gone past so I thought I should find you here," he said in his rather stilted way.

Her eyes wandered back towards the road beyond the compound.

"Do you want me for anything?" she asked.

"Oh, no," he said, smiling faintly, "it was not exactly for my own sake I came. I thought you might be lonely and, for once in a way, I have got news which may interest you."

In an instant her whole attitude and expression changed. She sat up and a flush of eager animation spread itself

over the finely-cut, aristocratic features.

"News!" she exclaimed. "Wait—let me see if I can guess! Colonel Fitzroy is going home after all. No? Why, then I know! Cyril has got his company!"

He shook his head. There was a faint shadow of disappointment in his manner.

"All wrong!" he said. "As a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with the Regiment. It has to do with what I have been working at all these months."

"Oh, it has to do with your work!" she said.

That was all, but there was a great deal in the tone—a sudden lassitude, indifference, a very slight undercurrent of contempt.

Perhaps he heard and understood, for he leaned his elbows on the railing and gazed out over the country that lay simmering in a haze of heat.

"P h e w ! W h a t weather!" he exclaimed as if nothing had happened. "If the rains don't hurry up we shall have all the diseases on the earth breaking over our heads."

He seemed perfectly friendly, but a slight feeling of contrition compelled her to say:

"You haven't told me your news yet."

"I don't suppose, after all, it would interest you much," he returned.

She made no effort to persuade him and they both relapsed into silence.

Enid wished he had not come. His

slow, methodical ways rather irritated her, and she began to study his profile with that carping criticism common to wives with over-strained nerves.

He had come straight from his laboratory at the back of the house and still

wore his white overalls, rather torn and considerably stained with chemicals. His tall, narrow figure and thin, pale face, surmounted by the massive forehead, were so little in accordance with her usual manly ideal that she found herself echoing the question her cousin Cyril Farnel had put to her when he first heard of her engagement: "My dear girl, what do you see in the fellow?" Of course she loved him—that was certain. But why? The Station was unanimous in its dislike, and Cyril, who knew a good recruit from a bad one at a glance, was guardedly contemptuous.

Irritated with herself and her thoughts which she felt were disloyal, she sprang to her feet.

"Why don't you go back to your work?" she said.

He gave a slight start.

"I thought you might be lonely," he replied, hesitatingly.

"Don't bother about me," she answered, knitting her brows as if the sun troubled her. "I expect Cyril will be round soon to cheer me up."

"Cyril!" he echoed.

He stood a moment silently contem-



Enid Sandys

plating his discolored hands, then he went on:

"I suppose, dear, if Cyril did not come quite so often you would miss him?"

"I should miss him very much," she said, looking at her husband with some perplexity. "We have always been tremendous friends. What do you mean?"

"Nothing—at least I have been thinking lately that it must be lonely for you at times. I shouldn't leave you so much to yourself. Only, my work—"

"I quite understand," she interrupted, sharply.

His lips parted as if he would have said something more, but at that moment the compound gate clicked and he turned away with a short sigh.

"I must get back now, at any rate," he said, "but I'll try and be in to tea, little woman."

She nodded, hardly hearing what he said. She was watching a tall, broad shouldered man who was walking quickly up the path waving his sun-helmet recklessly as he came.

"You mad-cap!" she exclaimed, laughing as he sprang up the steps. "One of these days you will go even madder with sun-stroke!"

He took both her hands and kissed them with debonair gayety.

"My skull is guaranteed in every way impenetrable, dear cousin!" he answered. "Why, where has Humphrey disappeared to? I saw him a minute ago."

"He has gone back to his hobby-horse from which, as you know, he rarely dismounts," she answered, with a rather forced lightness. "I fancy he saw you coming."

Lieutenant Farnel laughed.

"I am not exactly a favorite, am I?" he said. "I believe my good spirits and war-like ways jar somewhat on his nerves. Your Lord and Master has distinctly domestic tastes, Enid."

"You are always making fun of him because he is not a soldier," she said, frowning. "After all, his profession can require every bit as much courage as yours."

Then the frown gave place to a smile of pleasure. His muscular, upright figure, fresh, handsome face and clear eyes were

to her like an oasis in a parched desert.

"It does me good to look at you!" she exclaimed involuntarily. "You are just the person to cheer me up. Come and tell me some wild, exciting tiger-story—anything that will give me a real live thrill."

He shook his head.

"I can't—at least, I must have a word with Humphrey. In fact, for once, I have come entirely on his account."

"On Humphrey's account? What do you want with him?"

"Our medicine man sent me. There are some nasty cases of the Plague in the Native Quarter, and as the authorities are short of help they want all the professionals they can get. I told them Humphrey dabbled in microbes, so they've sent him an invitation."

As he spoke the color died out of Enid's face. Her beauty, usually lit up by a warm glow of health, became transparent and ethereal. Cyril, suspecting that his light tone had not deceived her, watched her with a tenderness in his eyes of which he himself was unconscious.

"Don't be frightened," he said. "It will be taken in time. They won't let it get to the Europeans, I promise you."

She passed her hand over her forehead.

"I wasn't thinking of that," she said, unsteadily.

He patted her on the shoulder. His manner became graver.

"Look here, Enid," he said, "you're a Farnel and the only thing a Farnel ought to be afraid of is Fear. You ought to be thankful, and so ought Humphrey, that he is given a chance to show what he is made of. This epidemic is for a doctor what a battle is for us—a test of his mettle."

She nodded. There was an expression on her face which he did not understand.

"You are right," she said brightly. "Except for the poor people I am glad, and I know Humphrey will be. Run and tell him. After that you can come and talk to me."

"After duty—pleasure!" he answered with a pressure of the hand. He turned and entered the house. She heard his brisk, firm step echoing down the corridor, but she was not thinking of him.

She was thinking of her husband and a new sensation awoke within her. How much the covert sneers of her old friends had hurt her she alone knew. Still harder to bear had been the faint but growing disparagement in her own heart. She was a proud woman and she had so wanted to be proud of the man she loved.

"A chance to show what he is made of!" she thought with a quickening of the pulses. Perhaps the time had come when he would throw off the desultory, useless dabbling in his laboratory and prove himself a man of energy, courage, and determination. An old hope revived with a new strength.

II

The two men greeted each other without cordiality. There was no bond of sympathy between them; indeed, from the first moment, both had been conscious of a secret antagonism as indefinite as it was real.

"I thought you were with my wife," Sandys said.

He had been engaged on some experiment which he now carefully covered up. He looked wan and haggard—a striking contrast to his stalwart, health glowing visitor.

"No," Farnel replied, drawing a letter from his pocket. "Hewet asked me to give you this and wait for an answer."

Sandys raised his eyebrows with natural surprise. Few people bothered to write to him.

"I suppose he wants something," he said, with a rather cynical smile.

Farnel made no reply. He was one of those men who looked upon unpopularity as a brand mark, and Sandys was undoubtedly branded. He had no sympathy with him.

Farnel's eyes wandered restlessly round the laboratory which, at the bottom of his heart, he despised as much as he despised its owner. He wanted to get back to Enid, and Sandys was an abominably long time reading his letter.

He glanced at him and only just managed to choke back an exclamation of surprise. Sandys was not reading. The hand which held the letter had sunk upon

the table and he was staring into space with a face whiter than the paper. The high forehead was damp with perspiration, the whole man trembled with an irrepressible excitement—or fear.

"Good Heavens, Sandys!" Farnel exclaimed, impatiently. "What's the matter? Have you seen a ghost?"

Sandys turned and looked at the speaker. His dreamy eyes were wide open and had that blank stare in them which betokens a mind whose whole force is focused on something afar off.

"No—not a ghost."

He hardly seemed to know what he was saying. He looked at the letter again, turning it over and over in his hands.

"Hewet wants an answer," Farnel observed, with the exasperated patience of a man who is conscious that he is speaking to a creature of inferior understanding.

Sandys started and appeared to regain his normal self.

"An answer—of course," he said. "I will write to him."

"You will go at once?"

"Go?"

"I mean—to the hospital. I didn't tell Enid, but as a matter of fact the thing has a nasty look. The natives are dropping off one after the other and we have had telegrams from other stations with even worse news. Help is urgently wanted."

Again the same wandering, nervous look flashed over Sandys' face.

"No," he said, in a low voice, "I am not going."

"Not going? What on earth do you mean?"

"Just what I said."

"You can't mean it. It isn't a little local outbreak. It's a disaster which is threatening the whole of the country. The man who holds back a helping hand is a—well, I haven't got a name for him. Look here, Sandys, you're a doctor. Pull yourself together and don't talk nonsense."

Sandys looked up.

"I am not talking nonsense. I have said exactly what I mean."

"What excuse have you to give?"

"I need give you none."



"I shall give you no explanation—not now"

There was a short, hot silence. The two men stared at each other, Farnel with open disgust.

"I am free to draw my own conclusions then," the latter said. "Sandys, you are just in a godless, awful—funk."

He swung round on his heel and went spur-jingling towards the door.

There Sandys stopped him.

"Farnel!" he said.

Cyril turned with well lifted head.

"If you have anything to say, say it quickly," he said. "I don't feel as if I could talk much with you."

"It's just this," Sandys said, quietly, "I want you to abstain from your constant visits to this house."

Farnel laughed with savage contempt.

"Why? Because I said you were in a blue funk?"

"No. You can say and think whatever you like about *me*. I don't care. It's about Enid. I don't go out much but I know what people are saying and they are beginning to talk about you and her."

"Oh, of course, if you are going to listen to every old woman's chatter—" Farnel began, with high scorn.

Obedying a sudden resolution Sandys crossed the space that divided them and looked his opponent squarely in the face so that he seemed to be reading down into the depths of his soul.

"It's not that I'm afraid of," he said, in the same level voice. "It is something else—something I have seen and recognized with my own eyes. Farnel, you love my wife."

The younger man caught his breath in a hard gasp. Perhaps he had never admitted it, even to himself, perhaps the truth sounded too naked and brutal. Then he lifted his eyes, which for a moment had wavered, and the whole of his contempt and bitterness which had lain smothered so long burst out with a reckless, headstrong violence.

"Yes, I do love her," he said. "Is there anything new in that? I have loved her all my life. Everybody knew it. Everybody believed we were meant for each other; I believed it: she believed it. Then you came—you, a poor, mean, weak-kneed creature, who hasn't even got the spunk to do his duty. I tell you, Sandys,

I would rather she had married any man than you. You aren't fit to breathe the same air with her. A Farnel and you! Good heavens!"

Sandys turned away.

"You may be right," he said. "I have no doubt you are, but that does not alter what I said. Enid is my wife and her honor is my honor. You will help me to protect it."

"His honor!"

Farnel laughed furiously to himself as he strode out of the bungalow. He had forgotten Enid, forgotten everything, save his own resentment and contempt.

Her voice calling from the veranda brought him to a standstill. She was standing on top of the steps smiling at him with a mixture of amusement and vexation.

"Is that the way you keep your promises?" she asked.

He turned his scarlet face to hers.

"I'm—I'm sorry," he stammered. "I'm going—I must."

"Wont you come and talk to me a little?"

"No," he returned between his clenched teeth. "I'm going and I am not coming again."

The smile died suddenly on her lips.

"Why not? What has happened? Have you two been quarreling?"

"Yes, you can call it a quarrel if you like. He has forbidden me the house."

"Why?"

He stared at her. His blue eyes shone like two angry points of fire. He made no pretense at hiding the truth from her or any effort to conceal what he was feeling. According to his principles a coward was beyond the scope of mercy or consideration.

"He has refused to help against the plague," he said in a loud, high voice as if he wished Sandys to hear. "And I told him to his face what I thought of him. Then he ordered me out of the house on some trivial, trumpery excuse."

She did not seem to hear the last sentence. She had dropped back a step and a gray shadow crept over her features. The eyes that searched Farnel's face were full of shrinking, terrible fear. But this fear he understood. It was the thing he

had himself felt the first time he went under fire—the fear of being afraid.

"A coward!" she murmured under her breath.

"Yes, that's what he is!" he affirmed in his headlong way. "He hadn't even the pluck to knock me down. He just stood there as white as a frightened girl, trembling like a whipped hound. Oh, he made me sick to look at him!"

He caught her hands and pressed them in a passion of regret and reproach.

"Enid!" he exclaimed, "what a mess we've made of things—what a hopeless mess!"

"Hush!" she cried, pushing him almost roughly from her. "You are not to talk like that. I don't believe, after all, that it is true. He has some explanation—he must have—one that he will confide to me if not to you."

Farnel turned away, as if he could no longer bear to speak to her or look at her, and strode out of the compound.

She stood a long time after he had disappeared, staring after him with the same drawn expression of intense suffering on her white face. She had spoken boldly, but at the bottom she felt as if the whole fairy structure of her married life had been shattered and the truth which she had striven so hard to ignore, made clear and irrefutable before her eyes. She, too, felt sick to the very heart. Yet she turned and went about preparing the tea with apparent calm and unconcern.

Only when her husband entered and advanced as if to kiss her, she drew back with a sudden irrepressible shrinking.

"Enid!" he exclaimed.

His tone rang false, the surprise feigned.

She drew back further, this time with full intention.

"You have not gone?" she said.

A hard, obstinate line shadowed itself round his mouth.

"You have been listening to Cyril?" he demanded. "He has told you?"

"Yes," she answered bitterly, "he has told me, but I want to hear it from your own lips. Oh, Humphrey!"—unconsciously her tone softened and grew full of pleading—"it isn't true, is it? You are going to help those poor creatures. Think,

there may be hundreds of them—thousands before long. You will go—you are not—*afraid*!"

"No, Enid, I am not going," he said quietly, but she saw that his hand shook with nervous agitation.

"Why not?" she asked, still pleading. "Is it for my sake? If so, don't think of me. I am only one and out there there are hundreds to whom you owe your first and best strength. You know, we Farnels have all been soldiers' wives and often had to give up our husbands to their profession. Sometimes we have even had to give up our own lives. We have tried to be brave, neither crying nor lamenting. I will try to be like that—only go—go!"

"Dear, I have my reasons. I can't."

"Tell me those reasons!"

He looked at her for the first time with angry eyes. Perhaps he saw the gathering distrust on her face, for unconsciously he clenched his fists.

"You must learn to trust me," he said, sharply.

She clasped her hands with a gesture of miserable despair.

"Yes, I will, indeed I will. I must. It's my duty. But I cannot understand and it is breaking my heart."

"I shall give you no explanation—not now."

She bit her lip, then she said quietly, but with a distinctness and trenchancy which gave every word its value:

"Cyril—everybody—will say that you have no explanation to give—not even the one I suggested, though it was poor enough. They will say that you are afraid—for your own life."

She waited for him to protest, to thunder her down with some authoritative answer which would restore her wavering confidence in him, but nothing came.

The frown gave place to a faint smile that was half-mocking, half-tender.

"Let us change the subject, Enid," he said. "You are upset. You have been listening to a young hot-head and are in no condition to judge in this matter. Give me some tea, will you, dear?"

That was all.

Slowly, as if in direct defiance to her own will, she came to the little table and obeyed. Every movement, every look was

an indignant protest. As for Humphrey, he seated himself in the shadow. Neither spoke. Suddenly Enid dropped to her knees and pressed his hand passionately against her cheek. "My darling, I do trust you!" she cried, in a voice broken with grief. "I do—of course I do, only—I am such a poor, foolish woman. Don't be hard on my want of faith!"

It was a piteous appeal to him, but he did not answer it. He only kissed her and smoothed her hair with his hand. Thus they remained silently side by side. The darkness crept in through the open window and minute by minute another darkness even more impenetrable was lifting itself between them, an intangible barrier, hiding each from the other's true self.

III

The clock upon the table had struck twelve.

Sandys looked up for an instant as if the sound startled him. But for the echo of the chime there was silence.

He went on working. With nervous, agile fingers he weighed and prepared the various chemicals before him. There was no doubt or hesitation in his movements. It seemed that the task he had set himself was a clear, definite one, and that he was striving to bring it swiftly to a conclusion. His face had grown thinner and his eyes had that wide open stare of a racer who sees before him the goal towards which he is striving with the last remnant of his strength.

As the clock struck again, this time the first morning hour, he stopped. He had



He held the phial up against the light

just filled and corked a little phial which he held up against the light. It contained an ugly yellow liquid, but as he moved it backwards and forwards he smiled.

That smile transformed him. The weariness, exhaustion, and hunted eagerness vanished. Had he at that moment been turned to an unnamed marble statue no one would have hesitated to subscribe the inscription. "Victory" was written on the face and in the attitude—not, indeed, a victory of brute force, but of mind over some unseen, intangible foe.

He stood there for a full minute, then gradually his expression changed, becoming less absorbed and more alert, as if

something had caught his attention. The hand holding the phial sank and he looked about him curiously and with a slight frown. He went to the window and threw it open, letting in a fresh gust of the night air. Even then he did not seem satisfied. He looked about him again, and the frown of perplexity grew more marked.

Suddenly his eyes stopped in their restless search and fixed themselves on the bottom of the door. Like a ghost a thin gray feather of smoke crept through the crevice and ascended slowly into the air, dissolving as it went. Another followed, this time denser, darker.

In an instant he had crossed the room, and wrenching the door open confronted the dark, terrified face of his native servant. The corridor behind him was one thick suffocating cloud.

"Fly, Master!" the man cried despairingly. "The place burns!"

Humphrey seized him by the shoulder and, dragging him into the room, slammed the door against the intruding volumes of smoke. Then he ran back to his table where he had left the phial.

"Has Mrs. Sandys returned from the ball?" he asked, in sharp, concise accents.

"No, Master," was the trembling answer.

"Thank God!"

The atmosphere was growing every instant less bearable.

Humphrey half pushed half carried the native towards the window.

"Follow me!" he commanded.

The bungalow was one-storied, and Humphrey's laboratory being on the ground floor, the distance was inconsiderable. Humphrey thrust the native over the ledge, following himself immediately afterwards. The next minute they were both running towards the front of the burning building.

"How did it happen?" Humphrey asked, as they stumbled through the darkness.

"I do not know," the native panted, "but it may well be the work of my distracted brothers. Whole families are lying at the door of death—the accursed plague is spreading and they say—"

"What do they say? Out with it!"

"They say it is because the White Doctor would not lift his hand to help them."

Humphrey laughed through his set teeth, but made no reply.

When they reached the front they found that a crowd had already assembled and were watching the increasing conflagration in helpless alarm. Sandys' appearance was greeted by the whites with polite exclamation of relief, and by the natives with growls which might have indicated either surprise or disappointment.

Sandys said nothing. He stood quietly on one side watching the flames leap up against the night sky with the unconcerned interest of an outsider. The disaster seemed to leave him totally unmoved.

Suddenly a hand gripped his shoulder. The grasp was so violent, so expressive of haste and fear that Sandys started round with an involuntary exclamation. He found Cyril Farnel's white, startled face within a foot of his own.

"Sandys—where is Enid?" he stammered. "In Heaven's name—where is she?"

Sandys stared at him without comprehension.

"My wife?" he asked. "My wife is at the Colonel's house."

"She is not. I brought her back an hour ago."

The questions and answers had passed between them like the exchange of pistol shots.

With a scream that hushed the chattering gossiping groups to silence and rose above the crack of burning timber, Sandys flung the people about him to right and left and rushed headlong towards the entrance of the bungalow, now wreathed in flames and smoke. He reached the steps—he was actually within the burning circle when he stopped short, as if stricken with paralysis. They saw his face, red with the grim reflection, they saw his eyes and their expression was one that not a man in that crowd ever forgot.

"I can't!" they heard him say. "I can't—oh, my God—I can't!"

Farnel had seen his hesitation, and with a bound reached his side.

"Where is she?" he shouted.

"Upstairs—the back room!" was the gasping answer.

Farnel rushed up the swollen wooden steps and disappeared, as it seemed to the horror-stricken spectators, into the very heart of the flames.

There was no sound now, save the hissing of the fire and an occasional crash of falling wood. A breathless silence had fallen on the crowd, and as if by mutual consent no one glanced towards the stricken man who stood rigid where Farnel had left him. They were ashamed for him, they shrank instinctively from him as from some hideous deformity.

The minutes passed. Suddenly a frantic cheer broke from the hitherto spell-bound watchers. Against the red glow a faint shadow outlined itself, growing rapidly darker and more distinct. An instant later Farnel, with blackened face and scorching clothes, stumbled down the steps, bearing in his arms a motionless something loosely covered with a blanket. As he sprang to the ground there was a crash behind him which mingled itself with the gasp of horror from the crowd. The roof had given way, the whole bungalow lay a smouldering ruin. Death had snatched at his two victims but one instant too late.

"Give her air!" Farnel shouted. "Back, all of you!"

With more order than is usual on such occasions, the crowd obeyed his imperative command. Tenderly and with infinite care, Farnel laid his burden on the ground. No one ventured to approach—no one save one man. As they saw him there arose the sound of a faint, irrepressible hiss. Sandys staggered toward the prostrate form, and dropping on his knees drew back the blanket from the white, drawn face. He bent his cheek to her half-parted lips and around him reigned again the breathless silence of fearful suspense.

He looked up at last.

"Oh, my God, I thank Thee!" he said.

Farnel leaned forward and caught the kneeling man by the shoulder.

"Leave her alone!" he said.

"What right have you here? She does not belong to you. You have lost her—you coward!"

The two men looked at each other for one brief instant. The somber glow from the now expiring fire fell on Sandys' haggard features and clouding eyes. Suddenly, as if some frightful strain had relaxed, he smiled faintly, but with a profound peace. Then, with an exclamation that sounded like a broken laugh, he sank face downwards at his wife's feet.

When they picked him up they found a glass phial in his left hand. The grasp was so gentle yet so firm that they could not take it from him. Two men bore him to a neighboring house and left him there to recover as best he could. No one cared.

"Better for him if he never came round at all," one man said, disgustedly. "For my part I'd rather have helped some of those poor plague-stricken fellows whom he was afraid to touch."

IV

Cyril Farnel was at the bottom an honorable, high-minded man. He knew it and reckoned on himself accordingly. It never occurred to him to question his own motives and actions, even when they were most impulsive. He was too certain that where matters of honor were concerned he was infallible. Consequently, he never realized, as he stood there pleading his cause with the woman he loved, that he was doing anything particularly wrong, still less that he was acting the part of tempter to a shaken and unhappy woman. Humphrey Sandys had proved himself more despicable than the dust under his feet, and so, like dust, Farnel was striving to sweep him out of Enid's life and out of his own way.

"You can't help facing the truth now, Enid," he said, pacing restlessly up and down the sitting-room of the hired bungalow, "and when you have faced it, what I have prophesied to you is inevitable. You cannot live any longer with him."

She buried her face in her hands and he proceeded with the energy and conviction of one sure of success.

"Another woman might go on with the old life, but you could not. You are a

Farnel. The Farnels have all been brought up to despise cowards. And the woman who lives with the husband she despises is a coward."

She rose with a gesture of despair.

"You are right," she said, "I cannot go on like this. I could not bear it. You see, I loved him very dearly, and what makes it worse—I love him now."

"No," he said, "you mean—you loved him foolishly and blindly. You didn't know what he was. Now you know, Enid, is it too late? Can't we put right at last an awful mistake—or must it be a fatal one, ruining both our lives? Enid, think what it means, think—"

He had taken her hand in his feverish one, though she tried to draw it from him.

Suddenly he dropped it of his own accord. Someone had called him by name.

He turned swiftly on his heel.

"Who called?" he asked.

"Farnel!" came the faint cry from the next room.

Cyril looked at his companion.

"Who is it?" he whispered.

He saw that she was white and trembling.

"It is Humphrey's voice," she answered in an undertone. "I did not know he had come back. He is calling you—he wants you. Go!"

He did not move and she looked at him questioningly.

"Are you afraid?" she asked.

His answer was to turn and walk slowly towards the door. It is not easy, in the best of cases, to face the man whom you have been seeking to betray.

The room he entered was scantily furnished as a bedroom. A little iron bedstead was drawn up against the wall and on it lay Sandys' prostrate figure, his hands covering his face. As he entered, the hands sank weakly onto the white coverlet, and then Farnel saw something that sent a pang of horror through his angry, contemptuous heart and held him rooted to the ground. The poor thin face upon the pillow bore the unmistakable traces of the dreaded plague.

"This is retribution!" was the thought that flashed through Farnel's mind, but his voice was not steady as he said aloud:

"I heard you calling. What's the matter? Are you ill?"

Sandys raised himself feebly on his elbow.

"Yes, I am ill," he said. "As things stand I am dying. Whether I shall die or not remains to be seen. I called you for two reasons: First, because my wife must not see me; second, because I believe you to be a most brave, honorable man, and I have a question to put to you which only a brave, honorable man can answer. Will you try?"

Farnel held himself stiff and uncompromising, but a curious uneasiness was creeping over him.

"I will try," he said.

"Thank you."

Sandys sank back, and when he spoke again his voice sounded as if it came from a long way off.

"Farnel, I want you to suppose something. Suppose you had a great pair of scales before you, and on one side hung your own happiness and the life of someone who was dearer to you than either life or happiness, and on the other side a thousand no, perhaps a million, suffering human creatures, and after them generations, whose suffering you could alleviate—suppose you had to choose, Farnel, either your ownself and that other, or the happiness and life of those millions, which would be your choice?"

Farnel hesitated, then threw back his shoulders.

"It seems to me there is only one possible answer to your curious question," he said. "What, after all, are two beings compared to millions?"

"You would choose the millions?"

"It would be my duty to do so."

Sandys turned his heavy eyes on the tall, upright figure and smiled.

"And yet, Farnel, you called me a coward because I chose as you would choose."

Farnel took a deep breath. The sense of uneasiness and doubt was growing upon him. He was no longer so conscious of his own superiority. He was conscious instead of a certain resigned nobility and dignity in the man that he despised.

"I don't fully understand," he said, retaining his ground with an effort.



Farnel, with blackened face and scorching clothes, stumbled down the steps

"No, but I am going to try and explain. You see, I have the plague. As I said, I am to all intents and purposes dying, but it's not by the hand of a punishing Fate, as you perhaps think; it is my own hand. I inoculated myself three hours ago."

Farnel staggered.

"You—are mad," he stammered.

"No, I am not mad, nor do I contemplate suicide. It is just this—I am my first patient. All my life I have studied the disease, seeking a definite cure and preventative. A week ago I believed myself at last on the point of success. It was the same day you came and asked for help. I refused, because the good I could have done then was nothing in comparison to what I knew I should be able to do a few days later when my discovery was complete. My life was no longer my own to throw away. It belonged to those millions whose fate lay in my hands."

"Why did you not explain, man!" Farnel cried passionately.

A bitter smile twisted the blue lips

"My wife cared nothing for my work. She only cared for the Regiment and her old life. She thought I was an unsuccessful muddler. And you—would you have believed me without proof? You would have said it was an excuse. No, I had to wait my time."

Farnel put his hand to his forehead. He felt that there was something pitiful and terrible in this revelation.

"Two nights ago," Sandys went on, "my discovery was complete. I believed that I was, at last, successful. Then came the fire. You know the rest. I was the only man who knew of the discovery—there were no papers, nothing to show the work I had accomplished. For one moment, Farnel, I was given the choice I have just laid before you. I chose. I followed what I considered the higher duty. God knows—it cost me most."

"And now—"

Sandys stretched out his arm towards the table at his side and took up a small steel instrument attached to a yellow

phial. "I want you to inject this serum—here, in my arm. I can't do it myself. That's one of the reasons I called you; I know you won't be afraid."

With a last effort he rolled back his sleeve.

Farnel followed his instructions. He was not afraid, but he shook in every limb. When it was all over Sandys lay back with closed eyes. An expression of peace and satisfaction rested on his suffering face.

"Thank you," he said, "thank you. I know what will now happen. I shall become unconscious. If my discovery is what I believe it is, I shall awake—cured—within twelve hours and with me those millions whom I serve. If it is not—I shall never awake again."

There was a dead silence. In Farnel's heart raged the last conflict. Suddenly he flung himself upon his knees and pressed the icy hand in both his own.

"Humphrey," he stammered brokenly, "old fellow—I'm so awfully sorry. Forgive me—won't you?"

There was a feeble answering pressure, the blue lips parted, and like a breath came the words:

"Of course—there is—nothing—to forgive—"

Again an absolute, unbroken silence, save for a woman's footfall.

Farnel turned his head; Enid was standing at his side. It was curious to see how suffering and thanksgiving were blended in her ashy face.

"I have heard everything," she said. "Go, I want to be with my husband—alone."

He nodded. He did not look at her again or speak, but crept from the room as if from some holy mystery which it was not for him to penetrate.

The evening entered into the little room and then the profound night shadows. When, with the first rays of morning sunshine Humphrey Sandys awoke to life and health, his wife was resting beside him, sleeping peacefully, her head pillowed on his shoulder.

The Satin Slippers

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Author of "The Alembic," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK RICHARDSON

PEGGY HAZEN pushed back the red hood of her quaint, old-fashioned cloak as she peered through the naked oak and elm trees at the deserted old house. She stood hesitating between the stone posts of the rusty iron gateway, the lock of which was broken, and which creaked lamentably in the gusty breaths of wind. A white tailed rabbit scuttled into the underbrush as the girl moved, and a black crow flapped its wings and flew creaking into the gray woods behind the house. The sky was overcast, and the ground white with snow. Many dim fears held her back, but the lure of romance was irresistible.

She overcame her fears, and trudged sturdily down the crooked carriage-drive and presently inserted a key in the rusty lock. It turned with ease. A puff of wind swung the door open with a groaning sigh that made Peggy's heart jump, and she entered the house of her ancestors. Then she shut the door behind her hurriedly, as if fearful that if she did not do so at once, she would turn back on the very threshold of her adventure. For the long wide hall was dusky; it was still! There were singular shadows: they lurked in corners; they moved as she moved. And from a dim canvas, the picture of a stern old man looked down upon her over the white bands of a minister's robe, with reproof and admonition surcharging his steady regard. But she determinedly pushed back her hood,

removed her rubber overshoes, and took off her mittens. For Peggy had come to see the Hazen house; and a few shadows and a bewigged old gentleman harmlessly framed on the wall, were not sufficiently alarming to turn her from her purpose.

Hazens had lived, died, and loved, labored, joyed and suffered in this house for two hundred years. Always there had been Peggys in the family, and always they had been to the fore in the



Peggy peered through the trees at the deserted house

doings of the clan. There had been that madcap Peggy Hazen who was beloved by a British Hussar, but who had loved (as she should!) a revolutionary patriot and who, befooling the redcoat delightfully, had galloped away one moonlight night with her Yankee soldier boy. And there was that doleful Peggy Hazen who wished to marry the little Italian singing teacher and who died of a broken heart when her stern father intervened.

The present Peggy's mother was of that name. She, too, was a figure in the family romance; and her mother had also been a Peggy—perhaps the most high spirited and individual of them all. But our little Peggy was aware that her mother had never told her all about this grandmother whom she had never seen and who now was dead. There had been a quarrel, and Grandmother Peggy had shut herself in the old home. Solitary, proud, and unapproachable, she died suddenly with nobody near her. The estate, which should have gone to Peggy's mother, was held somewhere in, and somehow by, that vaguely dreaded thing known as the law courts. There were other distant kinsfolk who claimed that house and money for themselves. They were rich folks, whilst Peggy's father and mother were poor. These things she knew, not because they had been expressly told her, but because she had now and then, and bit by bit, learned them from the conversations of her parents.

Once she had questioned her mother about the matter only to be kissed warmly, gently cried over, and told that some day she should know, and then she would be able to understand it all. But the stories that could be told to her now—tales of the old days in the deserted mansion—were freely related; and she never walked past without dreaming of romances and feeling that the house might hold one for her. She had begged many times to be allowed to enter it, but was not permitted.

"The house is in litigation," said her father, "and we must wait until the law decides who has the right to enter it."

"Oh, I never can wait to grow up!—and those law courts are so slow!"

said Peggy. "I've just got to see that house."

And—here she was! And her conscience was with her, already whispering that to disobey her father was—

Peggy did not waste her time, however, in debating with her conscience once she was inside the house; she immediately began her explorations.

"Now I'm here, I might as well see everything," she thought. "It's rather dark. I wish I'd come earlier."

To her left a flight of broad stairs ran upwards, veiled in dusky shadows. Here and there in the gloomy broad hall, doors yawned upon gloomier rooms. The light was dim and gray, and growing momentarily dimmer as the afternoon waned. At the far end of the long hall, there stood a tall antique clock and Peggy walked towards it, not realizing for how many years the clock had been silent. As she began to walk, she noticed that her feet were wet.

"Oh, dear, I hope I sha'n't take cold! I am glad it is so near Christmas, for I suppose Papa will give me a new pair of shoes. He will give me SOMETHING useful I know—for he always does. I suppose that is best, since we are so poor—but I would like to have something just pretty, for a change.

"Why the clock is stopped—of course! How silly of me to look at it!" she said aloud. "Stopped at twelve o'clock. Oh, I wonder how many years ago that was?"

There was nothing to yield a reply in the still face of the quaintly colored timepiece that had been in the Hazen family for generations. There were long glass doors reaching down to the floor, forming a cupboard of the lower part of the clock; and as Peggy peered through the dusty glass, she exclaimed, "Why, there are a pair of slippers inside—Oh, what tiny, pretty ones! I wonder if they would fit me! I'll take off my damp shoes and put these on—and then I won't catch my death of cold, in this draughty old house!"

She put on one of the satin slippers, leaned back on the settee near the clock, to admire the effect, and said:

"Well, my grandmother Peggy must

have had little bits of feet. This isn't much too big for me. But, dear me, I do feel so sleepy. I must keep myself awake."

This was uttered emphatically, with a firm nod of the little head, but the tones became drowsier and lower and the next moment she was nid-nodding, as she bent over and tried on the second slipper—

She became wide awake the next moment, for just then a voice said to her:

"They suit you very well, child! Come here to me, Peggy Hazen."

Turning around with a startled little jump that shook the dust from the satin slippers, Peggy saw a tall old lady with high-piled white hair, and black, bright eyes peering out from under her arching brows, standing at the foot of the staircase. One hand held the long train of her dress, and in the other was a fan. There was the tone of authority in her voice. She beckoned imperiously, although in a kindly fashion. The child hastened forward, her heart filled with wonder. How long could she have been sitting by the clock with her back turned upon the wall? Certainly for a much longer time than she had supposed, for great changes had been effected in the aspect of things.

"Perhaps I did have a little nap," she thought.

On the table near the door, a cluster of candles were shining through red silken shades. There was a broad strip of crimson carpet extending from the door to the staircase on the polished boards that Peggy had thought were bare; and, standing near the door, there was a tall old negro with white hair, dressed in a long blue coat with big silver buttons. All the doors stood open and from upstairs there came a sound of low, sweet music, and a murmuring of voices. The music resembled that of the piano, but with distinct differences; it was thinner and paler, as it were, and it played a thin, tinkling tune. Most wonderful change of all—there was now no dust to be seen; the picture-frames were bright and shining; there were lace curtains at the windows; there were garments hanging on hooks behind the door—in short, there

were all the evidences of habitual occupancy.

"Stand there, child!" said the old lady, sharply. "Turn your face to the light—a little higher! there—that will do!" And the girl felt the old, keen eyes flitting quickly and searchingly over her face and form. "Yes—yes, there is no denying that you are a Hazen—you are Hazen all over. But I still do not admit—mind you—that John Hazen had any right to the name! His branch *never* had any real right to the name. You, take after your *mother*, Peggy Hazen; every inch of you. Come nearer. Do you know who I am?"

Somehow, Peggy did know this, and lifting her big eyes to the pale old face, she said, shyly:

"You are grandmother, I think."

"I am! And now, I want you to give me a kiss—put up your face, if you please."

But the child gravely backed away.

"Well! what do you think of that? Why don't you do as I tell you?"

"I—I don't want to kiss you," murmured Peggy, a little frightened by the bright eyes frowning down at her.

"Why not?"

"You—you were not nice to my mama, and my papa. She said that you would not kiss her—I do not want to kiss you."

"Well, of all things—Child, do you dare—I never heard—Peggy Hazen!" cried the old lady, gasping at first in anger, but with a little smile of appreciation creeping into her eyes; "you are your mother's child all over—you have the real Hazen spirit. But do you know that you are wearing my slippers?"

"Yes, I do—shall I take them off now, ma'am?"

"Certainly *not*! I left them for you—many people have been wishing to slip into my shoes," the old lady said with a certain grimness; "and they all have been sorely disappointed, until now. They seem to fit you, Peggy. But, child, do not call me 'ma'am'—I am your grandmother—and wont you call me that?"

"Yes—grandmother," said Peggy, shyly.

"That is right; and now, Peggy, come

with me and meet your relatives. I am giving a little party in honor of Christmas Eve."

Peggy followed her erect and dignified guide into a large room lighted with scores of wax candles. The floor was of glistening wood, the furniture was pushed back against the wall, and a numerous company of men and women, youths and maidens, and a few little children, sat upon the chairs and couches. An immense fire of logs crackled in the fireplace. Holly and mistletoe and wreaths of green ground-pine were everywhere. On a big table in one corner of the room, where most of the gentlemen were collected, stood a huge steaming

bowl and, somehow, without having been told, Peggy was aware that it was punch. Against the wall in another corner there was a queer looking old man sitting before a queerer pianoforte, of a kind Peggy had seen once in a picture; and with him were two young men, one with a fiddle, one with a flute. The music stopped as Grandmother Peggy came into the room.

"Merry Christmas, again!" she said, cheerily.

And from all parts of the room, in boyish trebles, in girls' shrill tones, in manly bass, in feminine sopranos, and altos of many registers, came answer after answer of "Merry Christmas!"



Peggy saw a tall old lady with high-piled white hair

Peggy's hand was grasped by the grandmother, and the child felt herself drawn gently yet very firmly to the center of the room.

"I have brought Peggy Hazen, the youngest, to see you, and to be seen," said the old lady. Imperiously, she queried, "And now tell us what you think of her?"

Peggy wished very much to drop her head and hide it in the old lady's ample skirts when she felt the eyes of so many people curiously focused upon her, but she held her small head erect and gravely looked from one to another of the Christmas guests.

A portly old gentleman, addressed by the others as Judge Hazen, voiced the thoughts of all, as could be seen by the nods that followed his words:

"She is charming, ma'am—a real Hazen—yourself made over again, as you were some few years ago, ma'am, if I may be permitted to say so!"

The old lady bowed deeply to the judge.

"You have keen eyes, sir! Will you do me the honor of leading me out to dance? You, Peggy Hazen, will dance, if you please, with your cousin, Rupert."

A very handsome young man came out of the shadow of a distant corner, where Peggy thought she also saw the flutter of skirts; and, smiling genially, bowed before her and held out his hand, which she gravely took; and at once the spinet and fiddle and flute began to play a dance-tune, which she seemed to remember, but could not name, and to which her feet began to move as if of themselves. Then from the chairs and sofas along the wall, other couples, young and old, arose and joined those on the floor. The funny old man beat the tinkling keys of the old spinet with nervous vigor, the flutist puffed his cheeks alarmingly, and the fiddler scraped above them all.

Among the few old ladies and gentlemen who kept their seats near the punch table, the ancient negro serving-man moved with steaming glasses. The dancing flames of the log fire, and the pale shaded light of the candles, caused singular shadows to sway upon the walls.

There were shadows that looked like the shadows of swaying tree limbs—but how could that be, when there were thick curtains before the windows and the dancing-folk were men and women? Peggy could not puzzle her brain with such questions, however, for the music filled it, and she only wished that it would last a long time. But suddenly it stopped. The old lady had made a signal. The couples stood where they were. Peggy found herself in the center of the floor, again at her grandmother's side.

"And she *dances* like a Hazen!" cried the grandmother, triumphantly. "What shall I give her for a Christmas present? I did not know she was to come. But come she did—and I am glad of it. What shall her gift be?"

Although the old lady asked the question in a loud voice, her eyes were bent, and it was as if she asked the question of herself, and was now ruminating upon the reply she should make. And all the other Hazens kept a respectful silence.

"Child, tell me—what shall I give you for a Christmas present?" came a sudden query.

Peggy was startled, and on the moment she said,

"Something just pretty!"

"What do you mean by that, Peggy Hazen?"

"Why, why, grandma—papa and mama can only afford to give me just useful things at Christmas, and I'd like—"

"Ah-h, I see, I see! I told that madcap daughter of mine, time and time again, that John Hazen would never be able to support her in the way she had been brought up to expect—and my words came true—did they not, Judge Hazen?"

Peggy was shocked and awed by the strange change in her grandmother's manner. The smiling eyes were now darkly glowing with anger and resentment, and the eyebrows were drawn in a gloomy frown above them. Judge Hazen seemed very much embarrassed, as did the others in the room; they appeared to be in the presence of a tabooed, or dreaded subject.

"I—I presume you are right, ma'am," said the old gentleman, deprecatingly.

"John Hazen is not a worldly wise young man, I am afraid—"

"He is a fool!" cried the old lady.

And Peggy snatched her hand away. Her eyes blazed.

"Well, child! What is the matter now?"

"My papa is good—and kind—and clever! You must not call him names! I am going—I am going home to him right away!"

Her bosom was heaving, and the tears came; but she brushed them quickly, and confronted the stormy-faced old lady.

The Judge began to say something in an undertone.

"There, there, child, do not go just yet—I beg your pardon," said Grandmother Peggy. "What are you trying to say, Judge Hazen? It is strange the man can't talk out! You do so pretty loudly in the court-room, they tell me!"

Then, as if the tart outburst had relieved her bosom, she breathed more freely, and took Peggy's hand in hers and pressed it gently.

"I—um—I was saying that John Hazen would still have plenty of time to try to overcome his impractical ways, for I understand that the litigation over—ahem!—the property will be adjudged in favor of the Beacon Street Hazens, and not in favor of your daughter and her husband," said the Judge.

"What do you say?" cried the old lady shrilly, stepping forward menacingly.

The judge backed away hurriedly.

"How do you know that, Judge Hazen? Answer without fumbling, man—if you can do so!"

"Why, ma'am—although I am now—hem!—at a distance, as it were, from the fields of my old time pursuits, I still take a great interest in the battles of the law courts, ma'am—I strive to keep myself informed, and the facts in the Hazen litigation are as I have the honor of telling you, ma'am."

"But the will of '45—the will of the year '45, man! That cleared up all the confusion—it stated my intention! What has been done with that will, sir?"

"No such will has ever been produced,

ma'am—Ha! You interest me amazingly.

Is there another will, ma'am? Where is it? What disposition did you make of it?

—Ah, ma'am, I told you many years ago that if you had done me the honor of appointing me to look after your legal business, there would have been—"

"Tut! Tut! Judge Hazen. I can manage my own legal affairs—all others as well, I beg to assure you! So the Beacon Street Hazens will win in the law courts, will they? Ah, we shall see! Child," wheeling abruptly upon Peggy, "do you love that crack-witted father of yours?"

"Yes, grandma, I do!"

"Does he love you?"

"Oh, yes, indeed he does!" she cried.

"Your pardon, ma'am," broke in Judge Hazen here, "but you may have ocular proof of his anxiety, at all events, if you will look out of the window."

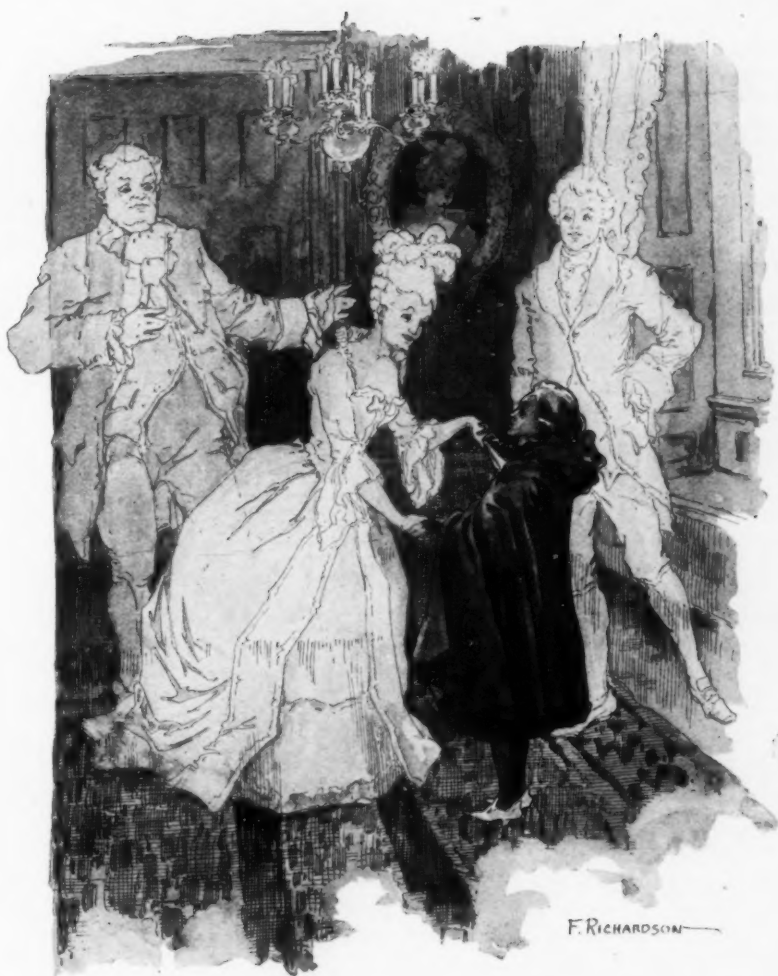
The grandmother swept to the window, followed by Peggy and a pushing, thronging company of men and women and children. They drew back the curtains. A half-moon had come out and was flooding the white snow with soft sheen, and Peggy could see her father hastening up the carriage drive from the street towards the house, carrying a lantern, and closely followed by her mother, and several other people, treading in the path marked by her own small feet that afternoon.

"And that is my Peggy there below!" the child heard her grandmother say, in a very tender tone. "Who are those other people, Judge?"

"They are some of the Beacon Street Hazens, ma'am—that is Lawyer Philip Hazen to the right. The other people are village neighbors, I presume."

Suddenly Peggy felt her grandmother's arm around her neck, and her lips on hers, and then the grandmother said:

"Peggy dear, will you give your mother—my other Peggy—this kiss from me? And you tell her that I wish her a merry, merry Christmas, now and always? And that I forgave her long, long ago—as she will soon know? And for you, child, this kiss—and for a Christmas present, keep my satin slippers! There—kiss me; that is right; now, run down-stairs and meet your mother and father."



F. RICHARDSON

"She is charming, ma'am—a real Hazen"

Peggy turned her lips to the love-filled face above her.

"But—papa? Don't you send merry Christmas to him?"

For a moment the old lips seemed to harden, then they parted in a smile and the words came.

"Yes—yes! For your sake, little one—I do! Now run!"

Turning first to the assembled company, Peggy made her lowest bow, and piped "Good-by, and merry Christmas to you all!"

And from all parts of the big room, in boyish trebles, in girls' shrill tones, in manly bass, in feminine sopranos and

altos of many registers, came answer after answer of, "Merry, merry Christmas! Merry Christmas, Peggy Hazen! —Merry Christmas!"

She darted out of the door towards the stairs, and as she did so, with the Christmas voices ringing in her ears, and the music of the spinet and flute and fiddle recommencing, she stumbled and fell downwards, on the stairs—downward—downward; falling and falling. She tried to cry out but could not do so—

But a real cry rang out:

"There she is, John, lying on the stairs!"

The next moment her father held her in his arms, and her mother bent over her.

"No, Mrs. Hazen," said the physician who was one of the party, one of their neighbors, "she is not hurt—she is sound asleep, that is all."

"She must have stumbled in the high heels of those old slippers; and I wonder how in the world she comes to be wearing them?" queried Mrs. Hazen excitedly, drawing off the dainty footwear. "Oh, Peggy, dear—are you all right?"

Peggy was opening her eyes:

"The slippers are my Christmas present from grandmother," she drowsily said. "Is it Christmas now, mama, dear?"

"Oh, doctor, I fear the child is out of her senses!" exclaimed Mrs. Hazen, in alarm.

No attention was paid to her, however, for a sharp exclamation from Lawyer Hazen drew all eyes to him. He had been curiously examining one of the slippers, and had withdrawn from the torn lining

of the sole a thin, folded sheet of paper.

"The lost will! Mrs. Hazen," he said excitedly, reading it through. "Your daughter spoke truly—in one sense. This slipper is a Christmas gift of the rarest kind. It is the will which bequeathes the contested property to you, Mrs. Hazen!"

"Yes—and grandmother sent a kiss and a merry Christmas to you and papa," added Peggy, sleepily but positively.

And when she told her story, of course everybody said she must have accidentally found the slippers, and just dreamed all the rest of it—but Peggy knew better—she knew that she had walked far back into the past. Afterwards she tried to do so again—but, alas! her feet had outgrown the measure of the satin slippers. Grandmother Peggy Hazen's tiny feet had been a famous toast in their day; and, although many folks may wear dead men's shoes, it is not so easy to slip into the footgear of the beauties of the olden time.

The Price of Memory

BY MRS. JACQUES FUTRELLE

Author of "Jerry," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

MRS. CARLETON slipped gracefully into a Chippendale chair, leaned her elbows upon a table to match it, dropped her chin into a palm, and allowed her gaze to travel pensively and a trifle tragically over the Sheraton furnishings showing from another room through the archway. A colonial window was in line farther on and she could see a wonderfully kept lawn sloping downward to a wonderfully kept roadway. Through a thicket of fir trees was a straggling bed of rocks and a glimpse of the sea.

"Why, it's simply awful!" she said finally, "awful!"

Her husband took two more turns

across the Khiva rug, then stopped and rubbed the back of his head reflectively.

"What's awful?" he inquired, suddenly. "Having the old things? Trying to get rid of them, or—or what? They're a nuisance in the garage."

She didn't answer the questions.

"They're too good to break up or burn, so don't suggest it," she declared. "Besides, there's too much sentiment attached to every horrid old piece, and I'd as soon think of destroying my child. Besides, too, they'll do *somebody* an awful lot of good, *sometime*. They did us."

He completed another turn.

"We've finished with them," he stopped to observe.



He sat down, Inconsiderately raising his feet to the table

She glanced about the beautifully furnished room and nodded.

"And you've *tried* to give them away?" he asked.

"Yes."

"To—to everybody."

"Yes."

"Even promised to *send* the oak bed to old Mrs. Scruggs if she'd have it?"

"Yes."

"And she needs it."

"Yes, oh yes."

"And the study table to—"

"Precisely."

"And paint the white bureau if—"

"George," appealingly, "we've discussed all that before."

"And we've turned out a car to accommodate the—the trash."

He struck a match savagely, bit viciously into a cigar, ruined it, tossed it and the match into an ash tray, and sat down, inconsiderately raising his feet to the table.

He tried not to see that she was smiling at him through her fingers, for the question was a vexing one and the frown most appropriate. But gradually he fell to remembering how she used to lean upon the sturdy table—just as she was leaning now upon the Chippendale—and smiled at him through the dear fingers that sometimes showed a cut or a bruise. For she did the housekeeping then; they couldn't afford a girl. The ugly, dear, old sturdy table that he used to put his feet on if he wanted to, because it *was* so sturdy, and the kid used to sit upon, dangle his fat legs, coo at his pretty mother in the blue print gown, or smile at the dear, tired, hopeful father, whose wonderful patent and consequent fortune was then only a hazy possibility.

As the Carleton fortune went up, the sturdy table and its companions, the oak bedstead and the white bureau, *et cetera*, *et cetera*, went down, reaching the barn and being finally discarded when the mansion sprung up in the place of the tiny cottage. Now the barn was a garage and the things were trash. The dear, homely, old things! His face softened. He leaned forward and covered her hands with his own.

"Do you want to keep them?" he asked.

"No, of course not," she laughed. "How absurd."

"The place is big. Perhaps we can put them somewhere."

"No, we won't try. We'll let them go this time—really! They *are* trash and—how ridiculous we are!"

Then, after awhile, reminiscently:

"But you do remember, dear, when we got them—and how? They were splendid—then! I picked up the white bureau at an auction—remember? It was quite impossible, but the brasses were fair and we painted it. I chopped the price of that paint from a roast. Oh, dear! And how nice it looked. The oak bed was never wonderful, but the price seemed *so much*—then! Nobody ever tried to give *us* things." She patted his hand. "And the sturdy table! We got it from the funny old man, at the queer little corner store near the mill. Remember? He said he just knocked it together himself, but it was sturdy, and was *something* like one that was supposed to have come over in the *Mayflower*. George, we were awfully happy then."

He traced a line on the table.

"Pretty stuff—Chippendale," he remarked, irrelevantly.

"Awfully," she agreed. "And now I'm going to try once more. There's a woman at that tumbledown place on the Point. She *needs* a bed, and—and other things, too, if she just had ambition to want anything. I'll even offer to buy a mattress. It may be a foolish notion, dear, but I won't be happy unless they do somebody some good."

"There are dealers," he suggested.

"My horrid, dear, homely, old things in the hands of a dealer!" she exclaimed.

"Well, we *could* die and will them to our friends," as a last argument.

"What a joke," she laughed. "Fancy Helen Chase with the sturdy table, when her kitchen is furnished in Circassian walnut! She'd faint at the bare idea. Push the bell, dear. No, on second thought, I'll walk."

Outside, on that wonderfully kept roadway, she was hailed by the six occupants of an automobile.

"Not going to the auction?" they exclaimed in unison.

"The auction?" she repeated.

A hand-bill was held forth.

"See," Mrs. Chase pointed out to her, "a desk supposed to have belonged to Daniel Webster; a tea-table that might have come over in the *Mayflower*; a chair—"

Mrs. Carleton was oblivious to the rest. A *thought* had pushed forward into her mind; a *thought* that grew clearer and magnified as the end of the list was reached. A queer, impish little thought that made the corners of her mouth twitch.

"And," Mrs. Chase finished, "I expect to get something really worth while."

"It's sure to be trash, Helen," she said, going over in her mind the "mights" and "supposed." "I used to go to auctions—a long time ago."

"Oh, my dear, but we *know* heirlooms when we see them. And the auctioneer is most reliable. Besides, it's lots of fun. We nibble crackers and sew."

Six art bags were held up as evidence.

"And we get so excited over the bidding. Everything always gets gobbled up. It's quite a fad now. Do come."

But she shook her head.

"I'm on a mission. But good luck to you," she called as the automobile moved away.

She crossed the little bridge to the Point, looked out to sea through half closed eyes, murmured "How absurd," and hurried on. The *thought* was fast becoming a firmly fixed idea.

She found the woman at home. The furniture was tactfully offered and bluntly refused, because the scantily furnished place was already a burden to dust and keep clean. She might have been disappointed if the *thought* hadn't intruded itself again. She ran a little on the way home, and breathlessly unfolded it when she found her husband. He was writing at a Heppelwhite desk.

"It would cost nothing to do it, of course," she concluded, "but then the things would go where they would be useful."

"If they are sold," he ventured.

"Everything always gets gobbled up," she quoted. "They said so."

He pointed a finger at a marble palace that obstructed the view to the right, and drew down one eye.

"Wouldn't it be funny?" he observed.

"And her kitchen even, furnished in Circassian walnut!" she exclaimed.

"George! How absurd."

"They won't know they are our old things."

"Oh, but they *know* heirlooms when they see them. They said so."

"That's why I said *if*," he reminded her.

He drew a blank sheet toward him, rubbed the smile from his lips, and after writing for awhile he handed over the paper.

She read:

Moving things to Hall.....	\$10.00
Rent of Hall for auction.....	10.00
Printing hand bills.....	2.00
Distributing hand bills.....	1.00

Total	\$23.00
-------------	---------

Auctioneer 10% of sales

"That's all I can think of," he said. "We might add two dollars for incidentals—there are always incidentals—and it's worth risking just to see how it will turn out. Now, I'll see the reliable auctioneer. Where's my hat?"

Five minutes later an automobile was skimming along the wonderfully kept roadway in the direction of the auction.

The Carletons wore an expectant, pre-occupied air that week, and jumped guiltily at the least sound. Occasionally something was most amusing, and they wandered away to secluded spots and smiled at the world in general.

They got all shivery and excited when the auctioneer came to look over the things on the day of the auction. Everything was deposited in a cluttered heap in the middle of the hall and looked horribly ugly and impossible. The auctioneer arranged them in picture-groups, stood off, squinted at the result with his head on one side, and rubbed his hands together. Mrs. Carleton regarded him anxiously.

"Wonderful," he remarked, "simply wonderful."



JOHN NEWTON HOWARD

She pulled open the drawer. Something gleamed. It was a lock of hair

"You see," George explained behind his hat, "he gets ten per cent."

She turned away and found herself in front of the white bureau. Poor old white bureau! To go at last—somewhere! It had been a good friend—once. The top drawer had the dearest little cubby place where the baby's socks just fitted—once. She pulled open the drawer. How small the place looked now! Something gleamed! It was a lock of hair. How golden it was. Could it be possible that the long-legged, husky boy of theirs had had hair like that? She remembered the day they sacrificed his curls and put him into trousers. She had put the curl away in the white bureau, and it had escaped unnoticed, when the bureau was discarded. She secured it, her heart going at a ridiculous pace and her face an absurd red. She slipped the curl into the art-bag and found a seat on one of the back benches.

Gradually the Hall was filling—an enthusiastic, democratic crowd. Outside automobiles chugged, while inside their owners sat alongside the wash-lady, and the wood-cutter's wife. An auction is a great leveler. Sitting beside Mrs. Carleton was Mrs. Clancy, who made a specialty of washing windows.

"I want that trundle-bed," Mrs. Clancy remarked, sociably.

Mrs. Carleton remembered distinctly an occasion when she had tried to *give* that trundle-bed to Mrs. Clancy, and the oak one, too. But Mrs. Clancy evidently didn't remember. It was just as well.

"I hope it goes under tin," she observed. "You see thim spool posts? Real art, I call that."

Mrs. Carleton crushed her lips together and nodded.

The auction opened with a little flutter as the crowd settled along the rows of benches, the occasional dropping of a pencil, or a spool, as the art bags were put into use. It was awfully exciting! Mrs. Carleton had a pad and a pencil, too; not that she expected to bid but because everyone else had them. Before anything was put up the auctioneer delivered himself of a short talk about colonial in general, and old things in particular.

"He's always *so* instructive," whispered Mrs. Chase across the people who separated them.

The first piece was a desk that she had found deserted in the attic of the tiny cottage when they came to live there. It was a rickety old thing but the shape wasn't bad. George had braced it, and it helped to fill in—once.

It was knocked down for twenty-five dollars, after a little tilt between two heirloom seekers, who would take chances about its being the counterpart of the one once owned by Thomas Jefferson. She found it necessary to critically examine her work and take the most serious interest in the French knots she was making. She was quite familiar with every line of that other desk. But they *knew* heirlooms. They had said so.

Once she allowed herself to look at George. He returned the gaze solemnly for a moment, then he slowly drew down one eye. She tittered audibly.

The split bottom chair, bottomless now, commanded real attention, because of the price it brought, but the sale had lost interest for her until the white bureau was brought forth. Absurd how she felt about it! Merely because she had found the curl and remembered the little cubby place where she had kept the baby's socks. The auctioneer scraped the paint from a corner and called attention to the wood underneath—the ugly, horrid, old wood that had been quite impossible. How many years since that other auction? She counted them.

And now, along that white ribbon stretch of roadway, and in the forest of trees to the left, was the granite pile she called home, with its Chippendale, and Sheraton, and Heppelwhite. Her lips snapped together. The white bureau had reached twenty-two dollars.

"Twenty-three," she called suddenly.

Someone in front turned and stared at her.

"Twenty-three fifty," came a woman's voice.

"Twenty-four," she said.

A momentary silence followed. The auctioneer took occasion to call special attention to the brasses.

"Twenty-five," from the voice in front.



Sitting beside Mrs. Carleton was Mrs. Clancy, who made a specialty of washing windows

"Twenty-six," she persisted.

Someone leaned toward her.

"Will you sell the brasses?"

"No."

"Twenty-six fifty," snapped her opponent.

She swallowed a lump that got into her throat.

"Thirty," steadily.

It was like burning old love letters that could never be replaced.

"Thirty-five," answered her. (Ridiculous—thirty-five!)

"Fifty!"

She tried to catch her husband's eye but he was minutely inspecting the ends of his fingers, collectively, individually. She held her breath while the auctioneer began,

"Going at fifty—I want fifty-five! Who will give me fifty-two? Going—"

"Fifty-two," tenaciously called the voice in front.

"Seventy-five," she called, suddenly.

She *would* have it. She wouldn't sell it for anything in the wide world. She tried to be calm while the droning "Going at seventy-five" went on.

On the front bench needles flew in and out of the embroidery, but the room seemed frightfully still. She was almost afraid some one would hear her heart beat.

"I don't *believe* it's worth seventy-five," murmured the voice, tentatively, "or—"

The auctioneer questioned, the head wagged "no," and after a horribly long half minute, he brought his palms together.

"Sold to Mrs. Carleton for seventy-five!"

She stuffed her embroidery into the art bag and got upon her feet.

Her husband was at the door but he didn't question her.

"I'm going home," she murmured. "You must stay."

She was crying softly as the automobile turned into the stretch homeward. And when she reached her room, she lay

face downward on the bed and had a real, jolly *good* cry.

It was all over; the bureau was hers, anyway. She began to try to find a place for it—here among the dainty, spindle-legged things that had belonged to *somebody's* great grandmother ages ago.

She hadn't decided quite, when her husband rapped upon the door.

"I suppose you think I'm a sentimental fool," she said to him, trying to smile through her fingers.

"Well, what's that about fools loying company? No, it's misery, isn't it? Anyhow—"

He pushed open a door leading into his own part of the house, and there in the middle of the Empire furnishings stood the sturdy table!

"George!"

"Here's the result."

He unfolded a paper.

"It might interest you to know that Helen Chase and I *fought* over that table. She was sure it came over in the *Mayflower*. She doesn't know a piece of wood from an onion except by the smell. Well, I got it."

"Four hundred and sixty-three dollars? Really?"

"Of course that included the absurd prices we both paid."

"George!"

Then he sat down at a convenient distance and, with a contented sigh, put both feet on the table, while she leaned on it and smiled at him through her fingers.

"Where's that young rascal who used to sit on the corner?" he inquired.

She did not reply nor had he anything further to say just then. The elf of the table was casting over them a spell—the magic spell of memory. The years dropped away. The Empire furnishings were but shadows of a dream. All that was real just then was a little white bureau, a sturdy table, and youth. A clock somewhere struck; the spell was broken. Their eyes met; they smiled and then—he kissed her.

An Understudy to Tantalus

BY JAMES J. CARROLL

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY B. LACHMAN

I

HAWLEY glared at the open telegram he held before him, and ground his teeth in impotent rage. The message was from an agent of his in Texas, and stated that a certain land deal had been put through according to instructions. That meant a profit to Hawley of three hundred thousand dollars. Think of it! And he—Ugh!

Drring-g!

Hawley turned a scowling face to the door.

"Come!" he snarled.

The door opened and a clear eyed, smiling young fellow entered jauntily. He advanced and laid some papers before his employer.

"Mr. Clay sent these in for your signature, Mr. Hawley," he said.

He was turning away, when Hawley called him back.

"What were you grinning at, just now?" the millionaire demanded, frowningly.

The young clerk stared at his employer.

"I—beg pardon, sir, was I grinning?" he stammered.

"You were!" thundered Hawley. "What did you find to grin at?"

"Why—er—I don't know, sir," returned the young fellow.

"Of course you don't," sneered Hawley. "You—what is your name?"

"Billy Preston, sir."

"You haven't been long in my employ, I think?"

"Three months, sir."

"Well, then, Preston," said Hawley, shaking a warning forefinger at the young clerk, "get this into that pinhead of yours: I'll have no grinning here. If I ever *catch* you at it again I'll fire you. Go!"

Again Preston turned away. But be-

fore he had taken two strides, the millionaire flung himself forward, and seizing him by the shoulder, whirled him around in time to surprise a grin of amusement on his face.

"Caught you, hey!" thundered Hawley. "Caught you with the goods! You are discharged!"

"But, sir—"

"But, nothing. Go!"

Preston walked slowly to the door; then his shoulders squared, and he wheeled and advanced to the desk again.

"Mr. Hawley," he began, "I'm going—"

"Well, why don't you?" snapped Hawley.

"In a minute," waved Preston. "But, first, let me tell you what I'll do when I get outside: I'll hurry to the nearest 'quick lunch' joint and order *four ham sandwiches—*"

"You—you—"

"And I'll eat them, Mr. Hawley. And with every bite I'll pat myself on the waistcoat and say, 'With all his millions Hawley can't—'"

Hawley purpled, and made inarticulate noises in his throat.

"Then," pursued Preston, "I'll invest in a slice of PIE! And when I've eaten that, I'll top off with a plateful of *SINKERS!*"

"Get out of here, you—pauper!" howled the millionaire, vainly searching for something suitable to throw at the impudent young fellow's head.

"I may be a pauper," retorted Billy, "but, for all that, I'm richer than you—*I've-got-an appetite!*"

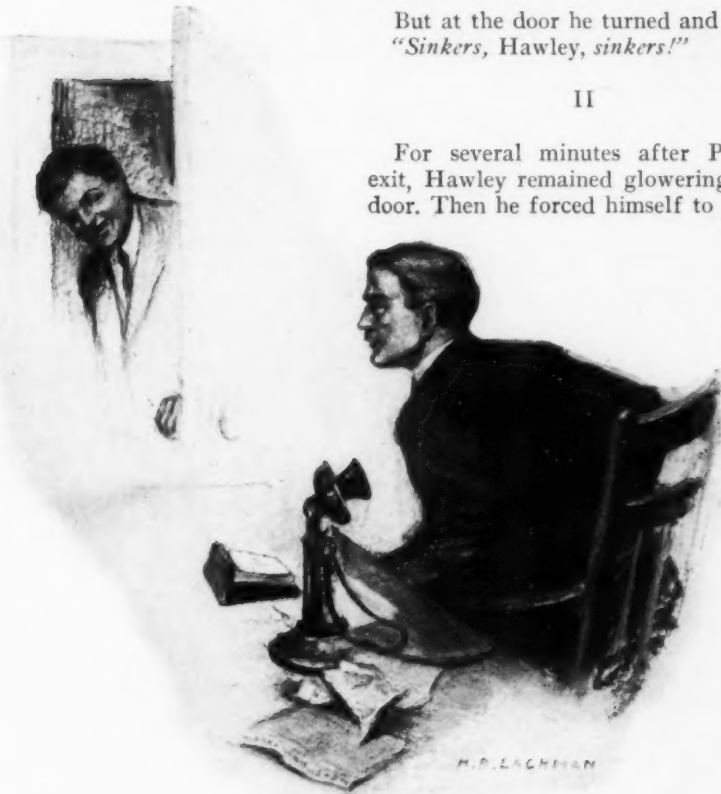
Hawley reached out blindly, and grabbing the papers Billy had placed on the desk, threw them at the young fellow's head. The latter ducked, and as the papers scattered and fell on the floor, proceeded coolly to pick them up.

Hawley jabbed his finger on a button,

But at the door he turned and hissed:
"Sinkers, Hawley, sinkers!"

II

For several minutes after Preston's exit, Hawley remained glowering at the door. Then he forced himself to pick up



"Sinkers, Hawley, sinkers!"

and held it there. In a minute the manager came rushing in.

"You—what is it, Mr. Hawley?" he asked breathless.

"Remove that fellow from the premises for all time!" ordered Hawley, pointing at Preston, who was leisurely picking up the last of the scattered papers. "He's—he's insane!"

Clay threw an apprehensive glance at Billy, and seeing nothing alarming in the young fellow's appearance, advanced boldly and placed his hand on the young clerk's shoulder.

"Come, Preston," he said with some firmness, "you must leave here at once."

Billy flung off Clay's grasp, and restored the papers to the desk. Then he turned to the manager.

"All right, Mr. Clay," he said cheerfully, "I'm ready now."

another telegram. But he hesitated about opening it. Finally, after turning it over and over, he flung it from him. He would tackle something else; something less apt to remind him of *things*. Things, he could buy, but couldn't use; things, he could use but couldn't buy. Ugh!

He reached for the papers Preston had rearranged on the desk. The top one was an order for a consignment of canned meats to be shipped to the men working in his mines in Alaska. Hawley signed it hurriedly. The next was an order for canned vegetables, to be shipped to the same place. Again he hurriedly affixed his signature. Then he examined the third one. That was for potatoes—tons of them—to the same destination. He scrawled his signature on that.

There were several other papers awaiting him, but he rebelled. He wouldn't

sign another if all the miners in Alaska were starving.

Hawley felt in his vest-pocket and drew out a small box marked: "One every two hours." He removed the cover, and took out a pellet; this he swallowed with a grimace. Then he replaced the cover and slipped the box in his pocket, after which he thrust his hands deeply into his trousers-pockets. They were empty, fortunately, and he had no more unpleasant reminders. His gaze wandered to the window and from there to the door. Then it shifted to the revolving fans overhead. Then it shifted to the window again.

Outside that window the sun was shining, the breezes were blowing, and people were going picnicking out in the country, or sailing down the bay, or automobiling somewhere. Fools! They ought to be at work. Good old work!

Suddenly it occurred to Hawley that, for some odd minutes, a word he had heard lately had been hovering on the edge of his thoughts, ready, at the first opportunity to mingle with them. "Sinkers." That was the word: sinkers; Hawley gave it recognition and it took possession of him!

For several minutes he wrestled with it mentally; then he pronounced it aloud. But the formula didn't work. The hateful word held possession of him until he had recourse to an old expedient. He wrote it down on a sheet of paper, and carefully filed it away. That worked.

So relieved was Hawley that he ventured another telegram. It was of much the same purport as the others, only, Hawley noted with some satisfaction, it heralded a smaller gain than did either of the others. A mere hundred thousand. He was about to drop the telegram and take up another when, of its own volition, his brain started on a series of problems

How many plates of sinkers, at ten cents a plate, could you buy for a hundred thousand dollars? At five? At three? At—oh, d—!

Again Hawley's finger jabbed a button; and again Mr. Clay came hurrying in.

"Have my machine brought around while I'm getting ready for the street,"

ordered Hawley, "then, clear up this stuff yourself. I may not return to-day."

Hawley headed his machine south and steered his way carefully through the heavy forenoon traffic until he had passed the congested district; then, when the open stretches of Broad street lay before him, he put on speed.

Hawley jolted onto Warwick Avenue and raced along until he reached the Silver Hook road. Then he slackened speed until he had crossed the Pawtuxet. Here an almost trafficless highway opened before him and he resumed his former pace, whizzing along through Warwick and only slowing up when the road in its windings crossed the "Consolidated" tracks.

At Green Spring Crossing the bar was down for a north-bound "suburban" and Hawley was held up a minute or two.

At Bayview Crossing Hawley was again delayed. An open southbound "suburban" was halted waiting for a north-bound car to finish taking on passengers, and pull away from the station. With the memory of his last experience to guide him, Hawley carefully avoided glancing around. Instead, he allowed his eyes to wander over the passengers in the waiting open car, and, to his surprise, noted young Preston among them. The impudent young fellow had a disjointed fishing rod beside him and a lunch-box of huge dimensions on his knee. For a moment Hawley gazed, fascinated, at the lunch-box, then he raised his eyes and encountered Preston's quizzical gaze.

Preston smiled, and nodded.

Frowningly, Hawley averted his eyes, and waited for the track to be cleared. But when the northbound had pulled out and the southbound had moved along to the station and the bars were finally raised, Hawley made no effort to start his machine. He sat idly watching the passengers dropping off onto the platform and dispersing.

When the car had left the station, Hawley, with a warning "Honk! honk" jolted across the track. Preston was on the road ahead of him, swinging jauntily along. The sun was blazing down witheringly, but its scorching rays seemingly had no effect on the young fellow.

Hawley wasn't quite a boor, and, when Preston turned and greeted him with a cheery: "Nice day, Mr. Hawley," he involuntarily slackened speed, and, with an effort at amiability, returned:

"Yes, it is. A trifle warm, though." Then, with a glance at Billy's rod. "Going fishing?"

"Yes, sir," nodded Billy, falling in beside the slowly moving machine. "When I left your employ this morning it was rather late to start hunting another job, so I thought I'd have an afternoon on the water. I hear they're biting good."

"They?"

"Squeteague, you know."

"Oh!"

"A fellow I know caught four six-pounders and an eight-pounder off here yesterday," volunteered Billy, seemingly quite forgetful of the morning's incident.

"That was—er—lucky."

"Yes, sir," coincided Billy. "Ever try 'em, Mr. Hawley?"

The millionaire glanced sharply at the young fellow, but Preston's face presented only the serenity of youth and health.

"Er—no," Hawley returned finally.

"I keep a skiff down here at the boat-house," Preston went on, "and if you like to try your luck I'll take you out with me. I know where the big ones usually run."

"No, I think not—thank you," the last with difficulty.

"Aw, come on," urged Billy. "I'll pay for the bait."

Hawley wasn't wholly without humor, and a slow smile broke over his face.

"Well, if it isn't going to cost me anything I'll go with you," he decided. "But where shall I leave the machine?"

"You can leave it opposite the boat-house," returned Billy. "Cap'n Briggs wont let anybody interfere with it. We turn off here."

III

As Preston, followed by Hawley, entered the boat-house, the former addressed the man in charge.

"Cap'n, I want you to put three quarts of live shrimp and a few live 'mummys'

in the skiff. And lend me a landing-net and a rod for my friend here."

"I kin let ye hev' a net all right, Billy," returned the "Cap'n" obligingly, "but th' only pole I've got haint much good."

"My friend wont know the difference," Billy assured. "He doesn't understand anything but money-making."

Then he turned to find Hawley, red-faced, beside him.

As they pulled away from the boat-house, Billy, on the forward seat, grinned hugely as he watched the awkward efforts of his companion.

"You're a little rusty on rowing, Mr. Hawley," he commented, "but it will come back to you with practice."

"I suppose it will," grunted Hawley, making a valiant effort to keep both oars working in unison. "Have we far to go?"

"Only about a mile and a half," returned Billy, cheerfully. "With this breeze we should get there shortly."

And no doubt they would have, if Preston had plied his oars industriously. But he idled shamefully, allowing the skiff to head north, or south accordingly as Hawley's left or right hand gained the mastery, with the result that they were often splashed by waves striking the side and breaking overboard.

At length they reached the channel's edge and, calling a halt, Billy dropped the anchor. With a grunt of relief, Hawley unshipped his oars and began to rub his aching muscles.

"That was a stiff pull," he grunted.

"It's nothing when you're used to it," returned Billy airily, as he began to fit together Hawley's rod.

When this operation was performed he ran the line through the leaders, fastened on a large leaded hook, baited the latter with some live shrimp and a squirming mummychaug, and having arranged the float about ten feet from the hook dropped the line overboard and handed the rod to Hawley. Then, having instructed the millionaire as to the right method of procedure in case the latter got a "strike," he set to work to rig up his own rod. In a short time his baited hook was overboard, and his float was being carried away from the boat.

"A fellow I know caught four six-pounders off here, yesterday"



"Why do you do that?" asked Hawley, as Billy began to "chum" overboard handfuls of live shrimp and sawdust.

"To bring the fish to the hook," explained Preston. "Sometimes you have to throw away a lot of bait before you get them coming. But it's worth it when they bite."

"Yes, it's worth it—when they bite," echoed the millionaire absently.

When the anchor was first dropped the little skiff fell off before the stiff off-shore breeze until her warp taughened, when she headed into the wind. And, as the tide was running out strongly, carrying the floats with it, the two fishermen were compelled to readjust their positions. This brought them side by side.

For a few minutes they sat silently watching their floats bobbing up on every recurring, white-tipped wave; then Billy exclaimed, suddenly:

"Gee, but I'm hungry! I guess I'll eat now, while we're waiting for them to come around. Wouldn't you like to share my lunch with me, Mr. Hawley; I've got enough here for two?"

"Got any—er—sinkers?" asked Hawley, quizzically.

Billy reddened.

"No, sir," he returned. "But I've got some nice ham sandwiches, and—"

"Pie?"

"Yes, sir—and pickles, too."

Hawley shook his head.

"I'm afraid I can't join you, Preston," he said. "The fact is, I'm not hungry."

But, when a minute later, Billy crunched a pickle, the millionaire turned wet-lipped and spat sternward.

In spite of the fact that Billy had lunch "enough for two" he managed to

eat all of it. Then, with a sigh of repletion, he closed the lunch-box and turned his attention to his float.

When half an hour or so had passed Hawley began to grow restless. The breeze was still blowing strongly across the bay, but, occasionally, it came in hot gusts that made him feel very uncomfortable. Besides, his collar was already wilted, and his neck was beginning to burn.

At length he said:

"Seems to me this is slow sport, Preston."

"Well, you see," returned Billy, as he "chummed" over another handful of shrimp, "you've got to wait till the bait gets carried to wherever the fish are feeding. Then they'll follow it up right to the hook. They're great feeders, Mr. Hawley."

A few minutes later Preston's float dived under. Billy began to reel in rapidly.

"I've got a 'strike,' Mr. Hawley," he cried excitedly. "When I get him near the boat, take the landing-net and lift him in. But keep an eye on your own float, as they

usually come in schools," he added, warningly. "And don't drop your rod, or it may get yanked overboard!"

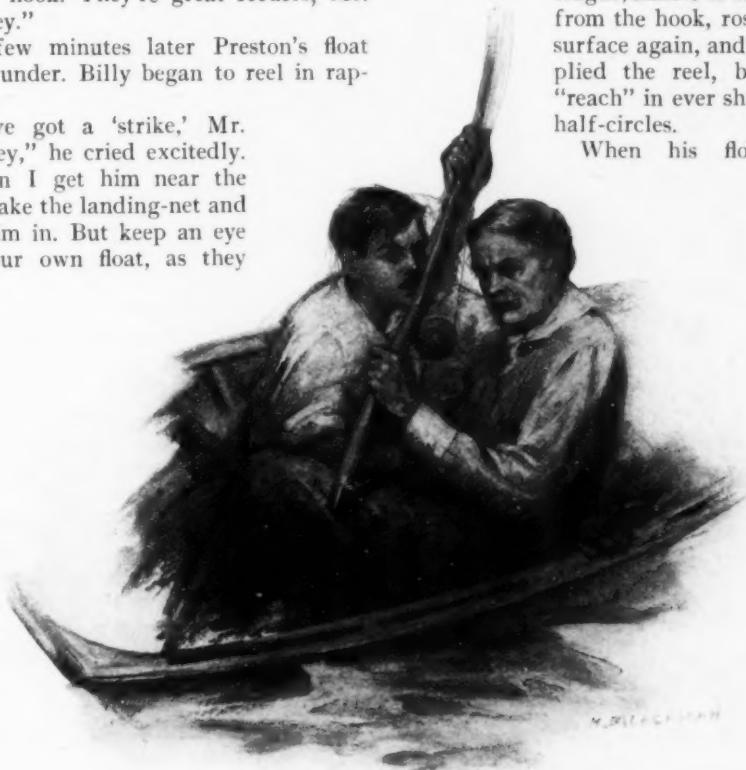
Hawley endeavored to keep in mind all Preston had told him, but when the fish leaped out of the water and then dived, he dropped his rod and, placing both hands on the gunwale, stared into the depths. Shortly, he saw the fish rise to the surface, and begin swimming in half circles, then dive again—this time under the boat.

"He'll get away from you, Billy!" cried the millionaire excitedly, as Preston's rod bent until the tip nearly touched the water.

"No, he wont," said Billy, confidently. "He'll 'break' in a minute."

True enough, the squeague, unable to free itself from the hook, rose to the surface again, and as Billy plied the reel, began to "reach" in ever shortening half-circles.

When his float was



"Seems to me this is slow sport, Preston"

reeled to the top leader, Billy cried:
"Now the net!"

Hawley grabbed the net, and after several ineffectual attempts, managed to imprison the fish, and lift it into the boat.

"It's a beauty!" cried Billy gleefully.
"I'll bet it weighs seven pounds!"

In the excitement of watching Billy, and assisting him land the first "strike," Hawley had completely forgotten his own rod. He was recalled to it by a sudden sustained "creeee!" He managed to grab the rod with both hands, but he only stared helplessly at the fast-running line.

"Grab the reel and wind in!" cried Billy, a little irritably. "Hurry, or you'll lose him!"

Hawley managed to check the fast whirling reel and reverse it. Then Billy, having released his own capture from net and hook, came to the millionaire's assistance.

"Keep him coming till he dives," he coached, "then let him have the line."

Hawley carefully followed Billy's suggestions in handling the "strike." The young fellow's careless remark in the boathouse had stung the millionaire, and he wanted to let his ex-employee see that, even if he—Hawley—understood nothing but money making, at least he wasn't past learning. At length the fish was brought close enough to the boat to allow of being skilfully netted by Preston.

"Why, he's bigger than mine," declared Billy generously, as he placed the flopping capture at the millionaire's feet.

"He's a—he's a whopper!" exclaimed Hawley, mopping his streaming brow.
"It's great sport, isn't it, Billy?"

IV

Encouraged by their first successes, Billy and the millionaire fished until the last handful of shrimp was "chummed" overboard. They got a good many "strikes," but, as often happens in this particular sport, most of the fish managed to break off. Still, this only served to keep up the interest; and, when they finally reeled in their lines, they were each well pleased with their afternoon's sport. Billy had caught six, Hawley four.

"That'll be five apiece—and you take the largest one," said Billy, as he counted the net result.

"I only caught four," corrected Hawley.

"I know," returned Billy. "But we always share equally, because the luck sometimes runs to one hook, and sometimes to another."

"Is that the invariable rule among fishermen?"

"Yes, sir."

"And, I presume, it's the rule to share equally the expense?"

"That depends," qualified Preston.
"In this case the expense would have been the same if I had come out alone. Besides, I like company when I'm fishing."

"I see. Well, I won't take any of our catch this time. My *chef—er—*"

"They are fine eating when you get them fresh," urged Billy.

"They look as if they might be," said Hawley, "but I won't take any now, thank you."

When starting out for a few hours' fishing, if you are aided by an off-shore breeze, a mile and a half is—a mile and a half. But when returning later *against* the same breeze, the distance seems to lengthen immeasurably. The more so if one of the rowers is a novice. Billy found the return to the boat-house a stiff task. But if it was hard for him, used as he was to that form of exercise, it was doubly so for Hawley. He tugged and sweated, sometimes missing his stroke with one oar, sometimes with the other, and, because of his position in the stern of the boat, getting most of the spindrift every time the oars splashed. Besides, his unprotected neck was being roasted, and his hands were beginning to blister. Still, he persevered until the boat-house was reached.

Preston borrowed a basket from the "Cap'n," into which he managed to crowd his trophies, then, when he had paid for the bait, he shouldered the heavy load and led the way across the planked "run" to the shore.

Here he turned to Hawley, and said, with a grin, "I'm hungry enough to eat a harnessed mule."



Billy managed to eat all of it

Hawley smiled sympathetically.

"I believe I am somewhat that way myself," he confessed.

"There's a man in that shanty over there makes splendid clam fritters," said Billy, pointing with his rod. "What d'ye say if we go over and get some, Mr. Hawley?"

"Er—are they light?" asked the millionaire, dubiously.

"Light! Why, I could get away with ten dozen of them," declared Billy. "They'd melt in your mouth."

"Well, we'll try some," decided Hawley, furtively wiping his lips.

Billy led the way to the shanty and unceremoniously kicked the door open.

"Hullo, Lem!" he greeted, stepping inside, followed by Hawley.

"How be ye, Billy?" greeted in return an old man who was busily engaged in packing clam fritters into a basket. "Been havin' good luck, I see."

Billy lowered the basket upon a bench.

Then he said:

"Let me introduce you to Mr. Hawley, Lem. Mr. Case, Mr. Hawley."

"Glad t' meet ye, Mr. Hawley," said the old man without, however, stopping his task.

The millionaire nodded stiffly. His sunburned neck made every movement of his head a torture.

"Mr. Hawley and I have come in for some of your clam fritters, Lem," began Preston.

"Sorry to disap'int ye, Billy," he said, "but I can't spare ye none now. Ye see, clams is powerful scurse, an' I haint more'n able to make enough to supply my regular customers."

"Gee!" exclaimed Billy, disappointedly.

Hawley ostentatiously drew out his pocketbook and extracting a ten-dollar bill offered it to Case.

"This will pay for all you've got in the basket, I think," he said. "Let Billy and myself eat until we're satisfied, then—"

The old man shook his head.

"That bill 'ud pay for all th' fritters I've got, three times over, mister," he said. "But, just the same, I can't sell 'em to ye. I want 'em all for th' cottage folk, becaus' they depend on me to keep 'em supplied."

"You might let us have a couple of dozen, anyway, Lem?" pleaded Billy, gazing hungry-eyed at the heaped-up basket. "I'll come down some rainy Sunday and play checkers with you, if you do."

The old man appeared less decided.

"Honest to cats will ye, Billy?" he asked, eagerly.

"Cross my heart, Lem," Billy vowed earnestly.

Case got two tin pie-plates, and counting a dozen fritters on each, placed them on the bench.

"Thar'," he said, "that's all I kin spare. An' somebuddy'll hev' to go short, at that. Pull th' door shet when ye're leavin', Billy; I've got to deliver these while they're warm." And ignoring the bill in Hawley's outstretched hand, the

old man shouldered his basket and hurried out to supply the cottagers.

Hawley returned the bill to his pocket, and reached for one of the tempting morsels.

"Are these anything like sinkers?" he quizzed.

Again Billy reddened. The afternoon's sport had engendered in his breast a feeling of *camaraderie* for the millionaire. With a certain happy ingenuousness which characterized him he had nearly forgotten the morning's incident. And, but for the millionaire's quizzing, he would have forgotten the matter altogether. As it was, he was beginning to feel heartily ashamed of his own part in the affair. Still, just then, he could find no fitting words of apology.

Hawley took a tentative bite of the edible he held in his fingers, then he reached for one of the plates and pushed the other over to Billy. For a few minutes the two hungry fishermen ate in silence.

Then Hawley began:

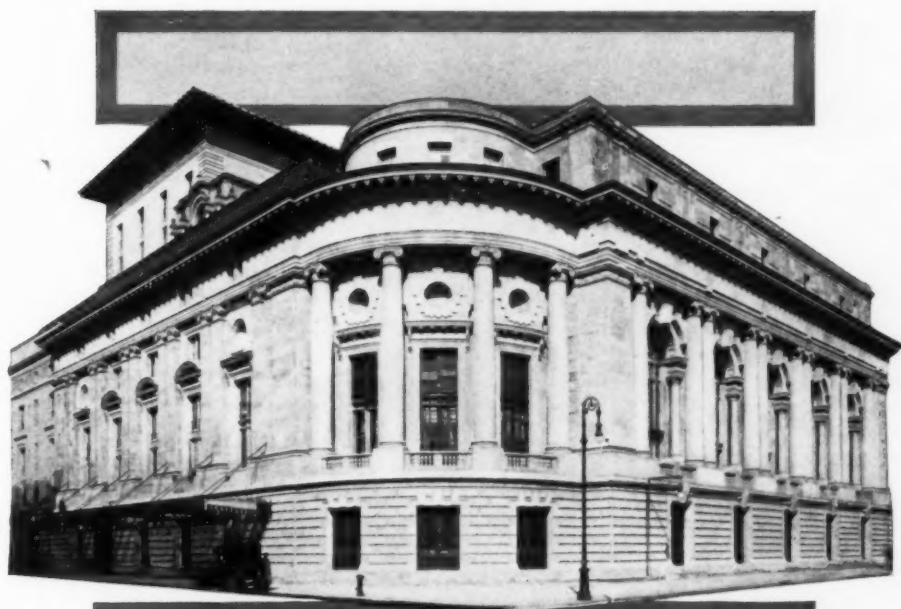
"When, through his own fault, I am compelled to discharge an employe of mine, I am always willing to give him another chance if he makes a suitable apology. But your case is somewhat different," he went on hurriedly. "Primarily, the fault was mine, and," he smiled whimsically, "that makes it harder for me to forgive."

"Still, I like to keep around me people who are not afraid to fight back; so, if you care to return I'll be glad to see you in your place to-morrow."

Casting a regretful glance at the now empty plates he replaced his on the bench.

"And now, since there seems to be nothing else eatable in sight," he concluded, "suppose you return to the city with me? I'll find room in my car for you and *our* catch."

The New Theatre, New York's endowed home of the drama



SOME DRAMAS OF THE DAY

by
Louis V. De Foe

Photograph by F. B. Johnston, New York

THE most interesting experiment ever undertaken in this country to elevate the plane of the Drama and foster a finer appreciation of the art of acting is now in the early stages of its test. The New Theatre, endowed by a group of millionaires and representing an investment of \$3,000,000, has thrown wide its doors and produced its first plays. Here, in surroundings of almost incredible luxury, the fragile flowers of histrionic art may blossom unmenaced by the brambles of commercial expediency. At least, let us hope. Surely this splendidly financed institution of altruistic aims embraces vast potentialities for the good of Art. Already it has been disclosed that the promises of its projectors have been kept. The structure, in its noble decorations and appointments, is not only the most beautiful playhouse in America, but one

of the finest monuments reared to dramatic art in the world.

The dedication was as imposing as the attendance of men famous in all the intellectual professions and the unfolding of a great Shakespearean tragedy could make it. "Antony and Cleopatra" was the play, and Miss Julia Marlowe and Mr. Edward H. Sothern appeared in its mighty central characters, surrounded by a company as fine as the dramatic profession in this country can muster.

Of the quality of the performance, if not of the brilliancy of the occasion on the audience's side of the proscenium, opinion must be qualified. As the "serpent of old Nile," Miss Marlowe distinguished herself, especially in the passion of the termagant scenes and in those flights of poetic beauty in which the tragedy abounds. What she most lacked was

something of that Oriental languor—that reptile quality—which is in the character of the Egyptian queen.

I regret that I must withhold equal commendation from Mr. Sothern's interpretation of the Triumvir. His "demi-Atlas of the world" gave only slight traces of rugged, commanding qualities. He was an *Antony* of Romance, of passive presence and of gentle manner. Physically and temperamentally he did not meet the character's requirements or display those dominating traits which, it may be believed, whetted the appetite of *Cleopatra's* ungovernable passion.

Scenically the production was the most impressive that has ever been given of the tragedy and a fine tribute to the artistic genius of the New Theatre's art directorate. Hard on the heels of "Antony and Cleopatra" came the modern satirical comedy, "The Cottage In The Air," by Mr. Edward Knoblauch, which displayed the new stock company in its lighter moods. I confess to disappointment in this little play, of which so much has been heard. It is politely written and quite irreproachable in taste, but it is not calculated to hold an audience's rapt attention. It puts its reliance, not in the development of incident, but in the spoken word; and of words Mr. Knob-



E. H. Sothern as *Antony* in The New Theatre's inaugural production of "Antony and Cleopatra"

lauch has written a wilderness, with oases of real interest few and far between.

The heroine of this spineless little work is *Princess Priscilla*, upon whom the ceremonies and artificialities of court life in a petty German principality have begun to pall. Her romantic yearnings are set upon a cottage in the air and the luxury of living with the poor and for the poor. So when her father, a

blustering grand duke, decrees that she shall marry her cousin, she steals away with her tutor to England and the cottage of her dreams.

Now follow contrasting pictures of the meanness, pettiness, and narrowness of middle-class English life in a rural community. There are the complaining pensioners, the meddling young curate and his straight-laced wife, and the grasping, sordid villagers. And all the time *Priscilla's* fine projects for the relief of the poor are going awry. She is imposed upon. Her motives are misconstrued.

Even the children—the chief objects of her benefactions—fall ill from her overdoses of sweetmeats. Then the exchequer is exhausted and creditors begin to press. But *Prince Henry*, her fiancé, is lurking near. When the fugitive princess is at her wits' end, disheartened, her dreams dispelled, he gathers her to his breast.

The acting of this little play is always competent, if never quite brilliant. To Miss Rose Coghlan, Mrs. Sol Smith, Miss Olive Wyndham, Mr. Louis Calvert, and Mr. Albert Bruning justly goes most of the applause.

WHILE dramatic art of the comfortably endowed kind is having its brave parade in the gorgeous peacock feathers of the New Theatre, it

should not be forgotten that Mr. William Faversham, unaided and at another playhouse, is also making an effort to dignify his profession and awaken a wider interest in drama that is also literature. His production of Mr. Stephen Phillips' poetic tragedy, "Herod," in scenes of splendor that are replicas of Sir Herbert Beer-

Miss Julia Marlowe as *Cleopatra* in "Antony and Cleopatra," which marked the opening of The New Theatre, November 6

bohm Tree's great London production in 1900 (he was plain Mr. Herbert, etc., then), will not be rewarded with the popularity that Mr. Faversham's ambition merits, I fear, but it will bring increased distinction to him as an artist.

There is in this work the essence of intrinsic drama, which some of Mr. Phillips' other poetical tragedies, notably "Nero" and "Ulysses," and, to a lesser extent, "Paola and Francesca," have not contained. One is conscious of the clash of mighty forces in its story of the grim retributive justice which overtakes the cruel tyrant of Judea. An inexorable fate hangs over the characters. But there are also lapses when the work becomes more a poem than a play and when the plane of the tragedy descends to the dangerous shallows of melodrama.

The dramatic effect is somewhat heightened because the action is focused on a single scene. The picture itself is so really magnificent that it intoxicates the senses. It is the Court of Audience of the despot's palace in Jerusalem. A sweeping burnished terrace leads to the golden doors of the palace itself. In the rear and at the sides rise majestic marble columns. There are great figures of beasts carved in stone. From brass brasiers curls the smoke of incense. *Herod's* throne, with its royal trappings, stands in the foreground at one side. And beyond a broad parapet bordered by a balustrade stretch in perspective the white roofs and walls of the city. Is not here a picture eloquent of royal prodigality and tyrannical power?

The literary embellishment of the story, quite as much as its recital of semi-historical fact, supplies the interest of the tragedy. *Herod*, vividly drawn as a treacherous, cruel, vindictive, and unscrupulous monarch, corroded with vanity and spurred by inordinate greed of power, is introduced at the pinnacle of his temporal glory. His jealous, suspicious nature leads him to look with hatred upon the young high priest, *Aristobulus*, the queen's beloved brother, who has become the idol of the Judæan populace. Hence, he orders the high priest's assassination by drowning in a bathing pool.

Herod departs almost immediately to make political overtures to the victorious Roman triumvir, *Octavius*, who has defeated *Marc Antony*, and soon he returns more powerful than before. But, meanwhile, the queen, *Mariamne*, has learned the circumstances of her brother's death. Her love for her royal husband is chilled and she now regards him with hatred and horror. It is then that *Herod's* mother, *Cypros*, and his sister, *Salome*, begin to stir his suspicions that the *Queen* is plotting to poison him in revenge. For a time he resists their insinuations, but at length he yields and decrees *Mariamne's* execution.

In the final act, *Herod*, unkempt, broken in spirit and bereft of reason, is a prey to his own guilty conscience. He is tormented by visions that *Mariamne* still lives, and his obsequious courtiers seek to encourage him in the delusion. Not until he commands the *Queen's* body brought before him does he realize his infamy. Then a stroke of catalepsy seizes him and his death follows.

Although Mr. Faversham acts with dignity and successfully avoids many of his familiar mannerisms of speech and gesture he also lacks many of the physical and temperamental qualifications for a rôle cast in such heroic mold as Mr. Phillips' *Herod*. The tendency to posture and the proneness to over-elaboration which, in the past, have marred Miss Julie Opp's acting, really aid her performance of *Mariamne*. She is beautiful to the eye, dignified in presence, and of regal manner and mien.

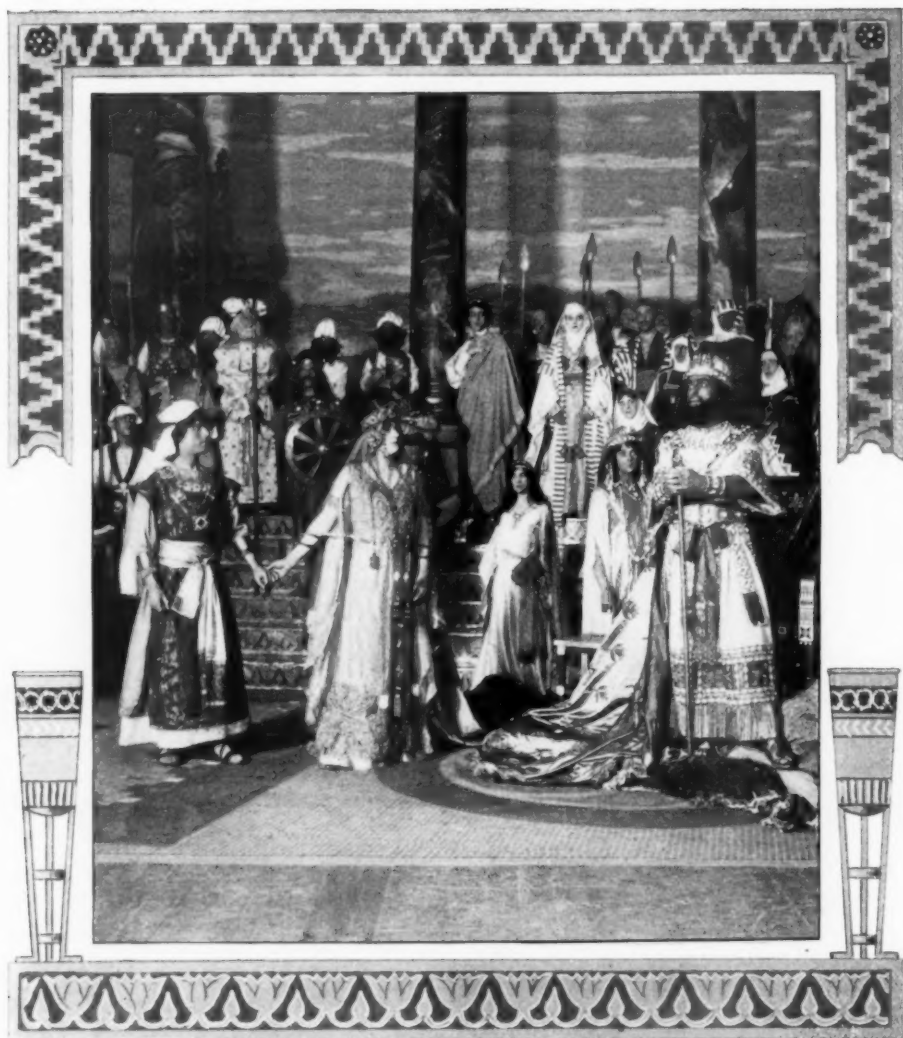
There are numerous subsidiary characters to voice the poet's lines, and a throng of two hundred people who animate the pictures of oriental life.

AFTER hanging in the balance long enough to settle for good or ill the fate of a play, "The Harvest Moon" has begun to make headway in the public favor. Its ultimate popularity, now reasonable to anticipate, once more acquits New York of the frequently repeated indictment that it is unwilling to exercise its mental faculties in the theatre. Yet, had "The Harvest Moon" failed out of hand, Mr. Augustus Thomas, its author,



Photograph by Byron, New York

William Faversham as *Herod* and Mrs. Faversham (Julie Opp) as *Mariamne* in the former's presentation of Stephen Phillips' remarkable poetic tragedy "*Herod*"



Scene from Act I—William Faversham's production of Stephen Phillips' "Herod"

would have been chiefly responsible. He is too prone to flout the recognized conventions of the stage. Being seized with a theory or an idea, he is likely to become straightway obsessed by it. His recent dramas present a bold antithesis to the work of most of our other writers. The latter, impoverished in ideas, must be frugal in their use. The prolific Mr. Thomas errs at the other extreme. He squanders ideas recklessly. He has almost choked his latest play with them.

"The Harvest Moon" is a corollary of

his highly successful drama of two seasons ago, "The Witching Hour"—the best American play, by the way, of the last dozen years. The thesis of that work was hypnotism. It declared by credible illustration the control over the actions of the individual exercised by the positive mental suggestion of others. It demonstrated a scientific fact now generally recognized, although one that has not yet been formulated into an exact science.

In his latest play Mr. Thomas' thesis is a more prevalent and subtle, and there-



Copyright, 1909, by Charles Frohman

Glen Stokes as *Mr. Holcomb*, and Adelaide Nowak as *Dora Fullerton* in Augustus Thomas' moving drama, "*The Harvest Moon*," a worthy successor to "*The Witching Hour*"



Copyright, 1909, by Charles Frohman
 Margaret Sayres, John Saville, George Nash, Adelaide Nowak and Stephen Wright in Act I of "The Harvest Moon." Augustus Thomas' second dramatic venture into the realms of the psychic

fore more dangerous, phase of this same occult science—indirect mental suggestion. Although he does not underestimate the value of drama of human appeal, his main purpose is to argue, in effect, that the constant suggestion of weak or evil tendencies will result in breeding similar defects in the person subjected to it, and that moral responsibility for this result rests with the individual who exercises such influences.

As the illustration of his theory of negative mental suggestion Mr. Thomas introduces *Dora Fullerton*, a young girl who believes herself to be the daughter of a grave but somewhat narrow-minded professor in Harvard University. Actually, she is the child only of his wife, having been born two years after the professor's separation from this impulsive, self-willed, vain, and unstable woman. *Professor Fullerton* believes the young girl to be illegitimate and has adopted her. This secret is shared only by his sister, *Cornelia*, who constantly holds before *Dora* the example of her mother's weaknesses and faults.

Dora grows up in constant doubt of her own moral strength and, to free herself from her unpleasant surroundings, obeys an inherited instinct and decides to go on the stage to impersonate the heroine of a drama written by a young playwright named *Holcomb*, with whom she is in love, although she is engaged to marry *Graham Winthrop*, in every respect a worthy man. The family objects to her course and calls into consultation *M. Vavin*, a French dramatist, savant, and old friend, who has made explorations in the field of occult science.

Vavin divines the difficulty at once. He encourages *Dora's* ambition and sets about, with the aid of suggestion, to strengthen her confidence in her own moral stamina. He also makes another discovery, which is not revealed until the end of the play. His influence, which is pronounced at first, seems suddenly to be upset when *Dora*, in a fit of unreasonableness and instability, throws up her rôle on the eve of the first performance and endangers the success of her lover's play.

By kindly cajolery and repeated ap-

peals to her better nature, *Vavin* leads *Dora* to realize and admit her error, and even to confess her love for *Holcomb*, whom she has peremptorily dismissed. And it is at this point, when the pair must be brought together, that Mr. Thomas relaxes his grip on the theme which he has cunningly argued, step by step, from the rise of the curtain.

The scene is now *M. Vavin's* hotel-apartment, to which he has invited *Dora* and *Holcomb*, under pretense of explaining various details of the latter's play. The room is curiously fitted with curtains and lamp shades of various colors. Breaking the continuity with all that has gone before, the story veers off into an illustrated lecture on the influence of various hues upon the emotions. Blue surroundings, we learn, superinduce mystery. Green, on the other hand, leads to content. Red invokes mild exhilaration. And then we are told that the golden sheen of the harvest moon is arranged by "that droll God" to produce the impulses which bring young lovers together. The window curtain is thrown back and in contemplation of the great disc hanging in the sky, *Dora* and *Holcomb* nestle into each other's arms.

Thus is furnished even the title of the play. It is all very pretty and poetic, but it has not even the most remote application to what has gone before.

However, the threads of the main story are gathered together again in the final act. In a fit of pique, *Dora's* aunt discloses to her the circumstances of her birth, which leads the girl to lapse again to willfulness. But *Vavin*, coming to the rescue once more, confesses what he has known all along—that he is her father, and that the former *Mrs. Fullerton* was his legal wife who had left him soon after *Dora's* birth and had died.

The acting is excellent, particularly the impersonation of *M. Vavin* by Mr. George Nash, and of *Dora Fullerton* by Miss Adelaide Nowak. As the *Professor* and his sister, *Cornelia*, Mr. Stephen Wright and Miss Margaret Sayres do uniformly good work. The lesser characters are also carefully cast and their performers are successful in realizing the author's intention.

A BRILLIANT dramatic reviewer who, unfortunately, has now ceased to comment on the theatre and its progress—for the very good reason, I am told, that he no longer believes it progresses—wrote a humorous article a few years ago in which he set out to prove, by the inexorable law of logic and the incontrovertible example of cause and effect, that "Peter Pan" was the most immoral play of its year. Of course his neat sophistry was disarmed at the outset by the self-evident facts in the case, but there were not a few literal-minded people, resident in England principally, who insisted upon taking him seriously and excoriating him accordingly.

"Springtime," the new romantic comedy in which Mr. Booth Tarkington and Mr. Harry Leon Wilson have sought to emphasize the most delicate phases of Miss Mabel Taliaferro's sympathetic personality, might easily become a fair target for similar good natured sophistry. Innocence unadorned was never before more guilelessly exhibited on a stage. To draw a bead of serious criticism against it would be as heinous as to massacre a robin.

The play, indeed, is so saccharine in its flavor that it suggests more than anything else a stick of peppermint candy. It is smothered in flowers, illumined with moonbeams, and seasoned with music, and it is as unlike men and women as we know them as a page torn from some old forgotten book of fairy romance.

The pictures are of the Southland of nearly a century ago—a stately manse, a woodland beside a dark morass, a chapel crouching beneath the widespread boughs of a giant cottonwood, a walled garden of a parish priest's cottage and the dim, shadowy interior of a somber chapel.

As these pictures shift before your eyes you are being told the lovelorn story of the beautiful creole maiden, *Madeline*. At seventeen she is as innocent of the wiles of the world as the driven snow. You learn with righteous indignation how she was betrothed when still a toddling child to her venal cousin, *Raoul De Vallette*. With alarm you see this plotting old scapegrace presently appear to claim his own.

Then the poor little princess falls asleep before the dim firelight to dream of a fairy prince. Lo! he comes. He is the dashing *Gilbert Steele*, son of a neighboring planter, who arrives on an errand to *Madeline's* stern father, the haughty *Monsieur De Valette*.

How pink-tinted the new world of real love that unfolds before *Madeline* when their eyes first meet! And how cold and drear it grows when *Gilbert* is ordered from the house. It all happens on the day before the Battle of New Orleans and, alas, *Gilbert* has confided to *Madeline* that he must join the troops of General Andrew Jackson.

So what is more natural than that *Madeline* should fly from her father's plantation to her fairy prince at the rendezvous? And what, also, is more consistent with the heartless ways of militant man than that she should be turned back by the officers of the troop? Footsore and sorrowful she plods her weary way to her childhood home, only to find herself mourned as a lost soul and seventeen candles, one for each of her tender years, burning on the altar in the plantation chapel.

Innocent of her transgression and bewildered at parental love grown cold, she turns in despair to the kind priest. Then comes the news that *Gilbert* has been killed in battle and with it the light of her reason goes out.

But *Gilbert* is not killed. He comes back laden with martial glory to learn the havoc that youthful love has wrought. His presence warms back the distraught *Madeline* to reason and joyousness again. At last, even old *Valette* relents and blows out the altar candles. So, as the old rhyme runs:

"They live in peace and die in grease
And are buried under the mantelpiece."

A snug little fortune has been spent by Mr. Frederic Thompson to furnish a beautiful setting for his dainty, attractive young wife. And there are plenty of other clever people in the company, including Mr. Earle Browne, Mr. William Harri-gan, Mr. William B. Mack, Mr. Samuel Forrest and Miss Bijou Fernandez.

"Springtime" matinees ought to make splendid trysting places for young lovers.

Photograph by White, New York
 Samuel Jones as *Kiss*, Miss Mabel Taliaferro as *Madeline*, William B. Mack as *M. de l'Alte* and Joseph Brennan as the *Pret* in *Springtime*, a charming comedy of the old South by Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson, designed as a vehicle for Miss Taliaferro



In the Liberty Theatre they may sit hand in hand and sip the ambrosial cup to their hearts' content.

I CONFESS to a strong personal dislike for that clamorous school of playwrighting which converts the stage into a machine geared to top pressure for the purpose of grinding out a series of extravagantly emotional scenes. I admit, of course, the daring of violating the speed laws of drama, and I know that the feat requires no little skill. But when the exciting burst is ended and the dust and racket have subsided, I find myself invariably left cold.

Such a play is "Israel," by M. Henri Bernstein, the author of that brilliant French comedy, "The Thief." But I would hesitate to place it in the same class with the latter work. It is more comparable with the same writer's "Samson"—a carefully laid train of made-to-order circumstances which leads to a single big situation in the middle act. The story deals with the religious, political and social conflict of the Gentile and Jew in France, a topic, happily, which is calculated to arouse only little sympathy in this country.

M. Bernstein cleaves closely to a single theme. He does not waste his energies on subplots. A trite, tiresome discussion which monopolizes his entire first act spreads before you all the conditions which account for what is to follow.

Young *Prince Thibault* is the most brilliant and fashionable hater of the Jews in Paris. He is the guiding genius of a coterie of virulent young men in a fashionable club who are pledged to save France from Hebrew influence. Do you not already hear a faint echo of the Dreyfus agitation of a few years ago? A member of the club is the elderly, dignified Jewish banker, *Justin Gutlieb*, and *Prince Thibault* and his conspirators have resolved to force his resignation by subjecting him to deadly insult. Opportunity comes when *Gutlieb* walks through the room. *Prince Thibault* confronts him, offers him verbal affront, and ends by knocking off his hat.

In the next act *Prince Thibault* calls at the salon of his mother, the *Duchess of*



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Edwin Arden as *Gutlieb* in "Israel," a racial play by Henri Bernstein author of "The Thief"

Croucy, and to his infinite surprise finds his enemy, *Gutlieb*, just leaving the house. He demands that the duchess explain the banker's presence. As an excuse,

she replies that, years before, *Gutlieb* was her husband's business partner and that she had sent for him to implore that he avoid a mortal conflict with her son.

This admission alone is a signal for a mighty flood of gurgitations and emotional exclamations. But the theat-

himself. He determines that he shall commit suicide or wall himself up forever in a monastery. In the original French version of the play he did the former which, of course, was the logical ending. But in the adapted English version, no such fine regard is shown for the common-sense of the situation. *Gutlieb* calls on *Thibault* and easily argues him out of his idea to become a monk. *Henriette*, the young prince's lover, comes a few moments later and is equally

successful in convincing him that he would be happier as her husband than as a corpse.

In the group of fourteen characters there are only three that come boldly to the surface — *Prince Thibault*, the *Duchess of Croucy* and *Justin Gutlieb*. Miss Constance Collier, who impersonates the duch-

rical display is not a circumstance to what will follow. Step by step and word by word *Prince Thibault* wrings from his mother the truth of her own life and his. It is the cruel breaking of a woman's heart on the rack of a relentless inquisition. Little by little she is forced to admit that in her early life she was *Gutlieb's* mistress and that *Thibault* is their son—that this rabid Jew-hater and the leader of the anti-Jewish party is, himself, a Jew.

The irony of the situation is effective and the theatrical expedients by which the disclosure is reached are not without rough theatrical value. But this single scene is practically the essence of the whole play. It is a round, full exclamation point, not at the end, but in the middle of a political and social tract. There is, however, a remaining act. The duel is fought. *Gutlieb* gets off with a scratch from *Prince Thibault's* sword. But the prince, now the laughing stock of Paris, must efface



Photograph by Hall, New York

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Miss Constance Collier as *Agnes* in Bernstein's "Israel," a part in which she has achieved great popular success

ess, presents the inconsistency of looking at least five years younger than her own son. She is a veritable whirlpool of physical energy, but her interpretation is strained and artificial and not at all likely to arouse

sympathetic response. Mr. Graham Browne, a new English actor, develops much emotional vigor and not a little real intensity as the prince. Much better than either is Mr. Edwin Arden's reserved, vividly outlined, and dramatically sound delineation of *Justin Gutlieb*, a convincing portrayal because it is accomplished without extravagance.

TERPSICHORE

herself is reincarnated in Mlle Adeline Genée. But no longer is it enough for this dancing sprite to float like a fluff ball in the air and intoxicate us with her exquisitely graceful and buoyant art. Also, Terpsichore has been coaxed to earth. Now she speaks to us in the language of mere prosaic mortals.

In "The Silver Star," Mlle Genée plays the rôle of the lost daughter of a New York millionaire who, after the usual vicissitudes of the conventional musical comedy heroine, is restored to her parents in the last act. A silver star is the means of her identification, and it also supplies the title of the play. She speaks her lines prettily enough, in a wee small voice and with a naïve, almost childlike manner.



Photograph by Sarony, New York

Mlle. Adeline Genée, the most wonderful dancer in the world, who is now appearing in "The Silver Star," designed to project her in a new series of ballet numbers



Photograph by White, New York
 Mabel Taliaferro as *Madeline* and Bijou Fernandez as *L'Acadienne* in "Springtime" by Booth
 Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson

But only when the tinkling music wafts her back to her native element does she really shine. Then she becomes, as of yore, indescribably wonderful.

She has five dances this year, in a *crescendo* scale of intricacy and grace. The sheer physical endurance they demand must be prodigious. There are a "Fairy Dance," a "Military Dance," a "Hornpipe," and two symbolical numbers in which she typifies "The Spirit of Champagne" and "Springtime." Their effect is even more beautiful than the dances in which she first became known in this country.

I have compared M'lle Genée to a fluff-ball. Perhaps I was wrong, for in all she does a purpose is defined. There is a guiding consciousness ever apparent. All are dances, but each is different from the other. She seems to become, for the nonce, an embodiment of the spirit of the particular dance that engages her. Thus the "Fairy Dance" is quite a different thing from the "Military Dance," just as the latter is again different from

"The Spirit of Champagne" or "Springtime." In a word, Genée gives us of this generation to know something of the genius of those dancers of another day who charmed our grandfathers—even our grandmothers.

"The Silver Star," as a spectacle, observed better taste than "The Soul Kiss" of unsavory memory, but it is leagues below the plane of M'lle Genée's lovely art. Scenically it is opulent, which, however, does not quite compensate for the rudeness and crudeness of much of its vaudeville humor. It is saddening to find such genius in the dance sandwiched between such vulgarly suggestive songs as "They're Not Doing That This Season" and "It's A Loving Wife For Mine." And the antics of the clowns, Bickel and Watson, are a steep descent from the loveliness of "The Living Christmas Tree" and "The Silver Grape Arbor."

As "The Silver Star" is adjusted to an exceedingly medium public taste it will inevitably be popular. There's no doubt of that.



Photograph by F. B. Johnston, New York

The circular stairway of the New Theatre